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LETTERS,

ON THE

INTELLECTUAL AND MORAL CHARACTER

OF

WOMEN.

ON THE STATION FOR WHICH THEY ARE DESTINED:
ON THE CHARACTERS THEY ARE QUALIFIED TO SUSTAIN:
AND
ON THE DUTIES THEY ARE REQUIRED TO DISCHARGE,
BOTH IN PRIVATE AND SOCIAL LIFE.

ADDRESSED TO

THE LADIES OF GREAT BRITAIN.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "AN ESSAY ON ORIGINAL GENIUS;" AND OF "THE HISTORY OF RHEDI, THE HERMIT OF MOUNT ARARAT."

"Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies."
Prov. ch. xxxi. v. 10.

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1807.

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DEDICATION.

TO HER GRACE

THE DUCHESS OF GORDON.

MADAM,

I AVAIL myself, with honest pride and self-gratulation, of the liberty with which I have been indulged, of dedicating these Letters to a Lady, whose illustrious rank and elegant accomplishments justly render her, in the opinion of the Public, the proper Patroness of a Work devoted to the Improvement of the British Fair; and whose acknowledged benevolence and urbanity of manners have rendered her the general favourite of both sexes.

I confess, Madam, I have not been very solicitous, in the following Letters, to ascertain with precision, the comparative merits of the two sexes, with regard to intellectual endowments; from a conviction of the difficulty, if not the impossibility of making a fair estimate of the talents of your sex, cramped as they certainly are by a defective system of education; but

as I have always been of opinion, that you have in general a real superiority over us, in moral virtue, I have endeavoured by various facts and observations, to establish that superiority, and to account for it.— Highly, however, as I respect the Talents and the Virtues of my fair Countrywomen, your Grace will not expect, that I should be blind to their foibles and their faults. While I have touched the latter, therefore, with as gentle a hand as a regard to truth would permit, I have studied to do justice to the former; regretting as I do, the inadequateness of my abilities, to the just exhibition of the female character.

Should we ever have the happiness to see female education conducted on a proper plan, and sanctioned by the recommendations and example of the great, the wise, and the good, the reformation of the other sex would be the immediate consequence. We should then behold Virtue in her most alluring form, arrayed by the Graces, the object of our veneration, and of our love; we should see the manners of both sexes improved by their mutual intercourse, and the female character raised to its just standard of genuine excellence.

I can form no higher wish for the welfare of my Country, or for your Grace's individual honour and happiness, than that you may successfully unite your endeavours with those of your Noble Family, and illustrious Connections, in producing a change of sentiments

timents and manners, so creditable to those who promote it, and so highly beneficial to the best interests of civilized society.

I have the Honor to be, with the highest respect,

Madam,

Your Grace's most obedient,

And most humble Servant,

W. DUFF.

FOVERAN, Sept. 24, 1806.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE AUTHOR of the following LETTERS hath often observed, with surprise and dissatisfaction, the general character of Women represented, by several of his own sex, not otherwise destitute of discernment, in a light equally illiberal, invidious, and unjust. Such persons have with very little candour formed their opinion, from a very imperfect and inadequate model, exhibited by the weak, the vain, and the frivolous part of the female sex; and then supposed the greater part at least of that sex, to bear a resemblance to this model; a procedure just as rational as to derive their ideas of the Gentleman and the Courtier, from the manners of a Hottentot, or to form their opinion of the graces and accomplishments of a well bred woman, moving in the circle of polished society, from the savage deportment of a Cherokee female. This consideration suggested to him the idea of attempting an impartial estimate of the talents and the virtues, the vices and the weaknesses of women; an idea, which he afterwards extended to a discussion of the various objects contained in the title page of the present work. As the subjects treated of, are unquestionably interesting to the female sex, he has addressed his Sentiments on them to his Countrywomen in general, in the form of epistolary writing;

writing; a mode of composition which seemed most familiar and attractive, and calculated, by the little narratives, whether real or fictitious, of which it admits, to amuse as well as instruct, by the illustrations they afford of the train of observation and argument occasionally pursued through these Letters,

Animated by a sincere and ardent desire to promote the most valuable interests of womankind, he submits his sentiments with diffidence, to the judgment of the Public, and to the candour and indulgence of his Countrywomen, with the most earnest wishes for their improvement; from which every discerning and benevolent mind will anticipate, with pleasure, the happiest consequences to both sexes.

As these Letters were written many years ago, though he publication of them, for reasons which it is of no importance for the reader to know, hath been delayed till now; no coincidence of sentiments could happen betwixt the Author's observations and those of later writers, except what might casually arise from different persons treating of the same subjects, without any communication with one another. A coincidence of this kind, will indeed sometimes unavoidably happen, because truth is one and invariable; and the sentiments which accord with this standard, will necessarily have a resemblance to those of others which bear the same conformity.—When this happens to be the case, he can conceive no other alternative that a writer can adopt in treating a subject, which, from its having been partly discussed by others, does not admit of much originality; except to refer to such treatises as convey the fullest information; to add and illustrate what may have been omitted by his predecessors, or to vary the mode of communica-

tion; and exhibit known truths in a different form, calculated to interest and gratify the reader.

In revising these sheets, the writer of them has found himself obliged to adopt one or other of these methods, in treating of the Duties of Women, which have been developed with great judgment and accuracy, by Mr Gisborne, in his enquiry into that subject. In this part of the present Work, therefore, he has not been so full in the discussion of topics, which that Gentleman hath so amply explained and enforced; but hath contented himself with recommending more briefly to his fair readers, the practice of those general Duties which they owe to their Creator, and to their fellow creatures; and of those particular Duties which arise from the various relations of Daughters, Wives, and Mothers.

In the other parts of this Work, he has not, as far as he knows, interfered with any other writer, either in the plan, or the execution. That these Letters have been written with the purest and best intentions, the Author has the testimony of his own heart. That he is perfectly free from every prejudice and prepossession in favour of the softer sex, he will not absolutely assert; but as he is a veteran and disinterested advocate for the Ladies, it may be reasonably presumed that the sentiments he has advanced, will at least be free from any bias which youthful gallantry might have given to the opinions of a younger Author. Though the following Work may have been composed under the influence of a certain degree of predeliction for his fair clients, he trusts, that this predilection has not warped his judgment so far, as to render him blind either to their foibles or their faults.

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LETTERS

TO THE

LADIES OF GREAT BRITAIN.

LETTER I.

YOU will perceive, Ladies, from the contents and arrangement of the following work, that I propose to address you upon subjects of the highest importance to your happiness, whether as individuals, or as members of society: I shall therefore hope to be honoured with your attention in the discussion of them; in which, though I shall avoid the formality of systematic writing, a mode of composition very unsuitable to the nature and design of the present undertaking, I shall observe the order pointed out in the general plan of the performance; and while

I am addressing the loveliest part of the creation with which we are acquainted, I shall studiously maintain that delicacy and respect, which are due to the sex in general, and which are peculiarly due to many distinguished and amiable persons of that sex.

In the execution of the task I have prescribed to myself, I shall endeavour, to be grave—or gay—as the subject and the occasion may seem to require. When I smile, I shall endeavour to smile with complacency and good humour: when I am disposed to be grave, I shall carefully avoid being either censorious or morose. I may sometimes be compelled to blame those frailties in the sex which originate in passion, in indiscretion, or in a rash and misplaced confidence; but I shall never '*set down aught in malice*,' nor exaggerate a fault, which the dictates of humanity, and the respect which I bear to your sex, would, consistently with truth and candour, incline me to alleviate.

At the same time, as I shall have much to praise, and something to blame, in my delineation of the characters of women, I shall assume an honest freedom, and endeavour to observe a strict impartiality in estimating their talents and their virtues, their vices and their weaknesses. I shall praise what is laudable, with sincerity and ardour; and I shall censure what is blame-worthy, without malignity, asperity, or petulance. Professing myself therefore as I do, the sincere friend of a sex, for many individuals of which I have the highest esteem, I shall proceed

proceed, Ladies, under your correction, to make some observations on your intellectual and moral character, and shall consider the different estimation in which women have been held, in different countries and ages. I shall then endeavour to fix the station in society for which they are destined, and the general characters they are required to sustain in it. After ascertaining these characters, and that station, I shall trace the duties incumbent on women in general, and more particularly those resulting from their peculiar situation, and from the relation they bear to the other sex.

In order to enliven the present work, and divest it of the air of a formal essay, I shall exhibit to the view of the reader, several different characters, and shall intersperse through a great part of the Letters, little pieces of history, that may serve to illustrate and exemplify the train of observation which I may occasionally pursue. These narratives, if natural, well adapted, and in any degree entertaining, will answer a double purpose. They will agreeably relieve the mind, fatigued with attention to a series of argument, and by amusing the imagination, by a representation of fictitious but probable characters and incidents, will serve to impress upon the heart those important lessons of morality and prudence, which might have escaped notice, if presented in a less entertaining form.

Conscious of the importance, of the difficulty, and of the delicacy of the task I have undertaken, I have

only to regret, that my abilities fall so far short of the zeal and ardour with which I feel myself animated, to promote your interest, your reputation, and your happiness. I shall only say, that in order to qualify myself as well as I could for the execution of this task, I have, to the talents, such as they are, with which nature has endowed me, superadded all the attention to this agreeable subject, of which I was capable; and though the pencil I employ, may not be dipt in the resplendent colours of the aerial bow, I shall, in finishing the portrait, endeavour to exhibit a just, if I cannot hit a beautiful likeness.

To the mistakes or imperfections, which, after my best exertions, may be found in these Letters, I would request the indulgence of my fair readers, in consideration of their design. Nor can I doubt, Ladies, that while I aim at restoring sense, spirit, and good humour, in conversation; and decency, economy, and virtue, in private life, I shall obtain the approbation and suffrage of the more respectable part of your sex, in favour of the attempt.

At the same time, I do not flatter myself with the hopes of effecting, by these Letters, a general reformation of the manners of either of the sexes; in endeavouring to accomplish which, the best hearts and the ablest heads in the nation have, to appearance, laboured in vain. The tide of luxury and dissipation hath, in this country, carried by far the greater part of the higher ranks along with it; and the united efforts of the

the Divine and Moralist have been unable, in any considerable degree, to stem the torrent. Yet their endeavours have not been useless. Some, it may be presumed, have, by the force of truth, and the impressions of duty, been reclaimed from the error of their way. A few giddy and inconsiderate females may, in an hour of sober reflection, when the paroxysm of intoxication and folly is over, be roused from their delirium, even by the perusal of these Letters; and induced to pursue that path which terminates in virtue, felicity, and honour. If these effects, by any means or exertions, should ever be produced, the reformation and improvement of the other sex will follow of course, and will keep pace with the honour and virtue of the Ladies; whose influence, in accomplishing the above-mentioned salutary purposes, is beyond conception.

In the meantime, the Ladies whom I have the honour to address, will not, I hope, expect, that in any enquiry into which my subject may lead me, I should accost them in the soothing language of adulation—a language, in which their pretended admirers and lovers have often, for the most criminal purposes, exalted them into Angels and Goddesses, while they secretly laughed at their simplicity in believing the lie. This language, so often prostituted by the silly and the worthless of our sex, and addressed to the weak and vain of yours, I have too much respect for you, for myself, and for what is more to be regarded than either, the awful voice of truth, to

adopt in any part of these Letters, which I wish you to consider as the transcript of my genuine sentiments.

Ardently desirous, therefore, as I am, of promoting your best interests, and your real happiness, I am guilty of no flattery, when I assure you, that I am, with undissembled esteem and respect,

Your zealous and faithful Friend.

LET-

LETTER II.

IT is the observation, Ladies, of a Poet, who was seldom in the humour of complimenting your sex, (though he, too, had his favourites, whom he commended at the expence of the rest of womankind,) that ‘ most women have no character at all *,’ and are best distinguished by their complexion, ‘ black, brown, or fair.’ The Poet has not told us, what complexion he would like best in his mistress; but if the general character of women be similar and uninteresting, and their sentiments and passions run in one uniform channel, as Pope seems to insinuate, we need not be very solicitous about the complexion, which will not long engage the attention of a sensible lover, where there is nothing various or striking in the character, to excite or to arrest it. The severest punishment which a woman of spirit, concerned for the honour of her sex, could have wished to have been inflicted on the Poet, for his disrespectful and illiberal treatment of women, and his unfaith-

* Pope, in his Moral Essays, Epistle II. to a Lady.

ful delineation of the female character, would have been the coupling him with a termagant, who should be the plague of his life. Such a one might have been permitted, without any imputation of ill nature, to enjoy his ineffectual attempts in 'the Taming of the Shrew,' who would probably have convinced her loving consort, in language not quite so harmonious indeed as his own poetry, that there was *some little variety* in the character of women. Whatever might have been the effects of her eloquence, the observation of the Poet seems to be invidious, and in the extent in which it appears to be understood, we may, I think, with submission to so celebrated a writer, pronounce it to be ill founded. Pope indeed, gives the credit of the above remark to his female friend, the Lady to whom his Epistle is addressed; but he gives it at the same time the sanction of his entire concurrence and approbation.

'Nothing so true as what you once let fall,
'Most women have no character at all.'

Yet the Poet has himself, unwittingly, in contradiction to his general position, not only delineated a great number of female characters, strikingly diversified, in the subsequent part of the Poem, with a masterly pencil, but has with exquisite wit and humour, exhibited a variety of amazing inconsistencies in the same character.

'Rufa, whose eye quick glancing o'er the Park,'
'Attracts each light gay meteor of a spark;
'Agrees

'Agrees as well with Rufa, studying Locke,
'As Sappho's diamonds with her dirty smock:
'Or Sappho, at her toilet's greasy task,
'With Sappho fragrant at an evening mask.'

The truth is, after all, that the lines are not so strongly marked, nor are the features for the most part so clearly discernible in the character of women, as they are in those of men; and a much greater similarity and sameness in general, runs through the female than through the male character. The sphere of action in which women are engaged, is more confined and less diversified than ours; and their passions, of consequence, especially after marriage, flow in a more uniform channel, and with a more equable current, which must necessarily give a greater uniformity to their characters. Pope himself has very properly traced these passions to two general sources,

'The love of pleasure, and the love of sway.'

Sources, from which are derived most of those rivulets that run through, and diversify the field of female manners. The former discovers itself in very considerable variety in the characters of women in general; and the latter, often with no little diversity, in those of the married dames, affording great scope for the exercise of ingenuity and stratagem in the government of their husbands. A more general similarity of character, however, Ladies, as I have already observed, takes place among your sex than among ours, resulting from your particular station in

in society, and from the more uniform occupations and duties of domestic life, peculiar to your sex.—But this similarity is by no means so complete, as that a careful observer may not distinguish the peculiar lineaments of each. Thus one woman is not only distinguished by sensibility and softness, and another by vivacity and spirit; but both those qualities admit of different modifications and expressions in different persons. Miss Byron, for instance, in the History of Sir Charles Grandison, is remarkable for her sensibility, and Lady G. for her spirit; the sensibility of Miss Byron too, is different from that of Lady Clementina. In the former it is more tempered with reason; in the latter, it is so violent, as to overturn the understanding. Lady Clementina and Lady G. are likewise both distinguished for their spirit; but this quality is, in these two Ladies, essentially different. The spirit of Clementina is great and lofty; that of Lady G. wild and frolicsome, and through mere sportiveness, often perverse. These I grant are fictitious and ideal characters; but still they are copied from nature, and like what we have seen in real life.

The different proportions and modifications of those original and essential powers of the mind, imagination, judgment, and taste, and the various sentiments, passions, and affections of the heart, are the sources of the difference we observe in the characters of women, as well as in those of men. Of the two classes, however, the latter impart stronger

tints

tints to the character of both. The mental powers above-mentioned, imagination, judgment, and taste, relate to the intellectual character alone; the sentiments, passions, and affections, wholly to the moral. I shall therefore, in the following Letter, consider, in what degree, imagination is discernible in the intellectual character of women.

LET-

LETTER III.

WE meet with a beautiful and refined observation in one of Sir Thomas Fitzosborne's Letters *, that 'as nature has traced out a separate course of action for the two sexes, and as they are appointed to distinct offices of life, it is not improbable, that there may be something distinct likewise in the frame of their minds; that there may be a kind of sex in the very soul:'—After having delivered it as his opinion, that, 'the souls of the two sexes are wrought off from different models,' he very judiciously remarks, that the 'casts may be equally perfect, though it should be allowed, that they are essentially different.' If this observation hold true of the female mind in general, it must hold equally true of its various and constituent faculties; and that distinguishing faculty of imagination in particular, will in its peculiar modification, and most probably in its degree, be found for the most part, discriminated in the minds of women, from the same faculty, as it usually appears in the other sex. It is certain, at any rate, that of this enchanting but illusive faculty,

a

* Letter 41. on the comparative merit of the two Sexes.

a very large proportion is discernible in the female mind. Imagination in women is for the most part more gay and sprightly than in men, but it is usually at the same time, as I am inclined to think, less vigorous and extensive.

Of that creative power and energy of imagination, which is exerted in calling into existence things that are not, and, in bestowing on shadowy forms all the colours of life and reality, a power rarely exhibited by any mind; I do not remember to have met with any remarkable examples in your sex. That power of deep musing thought, and that sublime melancholy, which is the inseparable concomitant of exalted genius, and which prompts those that are actuated by it, to ruminate on the vicissitudes of life, and on the mournful scenes of ancient days, together with the talent of inventing and exhibiting supernatural characters, with their proper insignia and attributes, are indeed so rarely combined, that a period of six thousand years, extending from the creation of the world to the present day, has perhaps furnished only three examples of their combination in an extraordinary degree (if we except some of the inspired writers,) in those great originals, Homer, Shakespeare, and Milton.—At the same time, I will by no means positively maintain, that women are incapable of attaining excellence in this highest species of invention; though, I am apt to believe, that the delicate organization of their frame is obstructive of, if not incompatible with distinguished success in

in it, to the attainment of which a creative energy and masculine vigour of mind, are indispensibly requisite.

In their present situation, it is certain, that the tender, elegiac and descriptive kinds of poetry, seem to be peculiarly suited to female genius; and in this walk, several of the fair sex have acquired a high and just reputation. The productions of Mrs Carter, Miss More *, and Miss Seward, would in these species of composition do credit to either of the sexes.

Memoirs, Romances, and Novels, are likewise species of composition, peculiarly adapted to the powers of female genius. Those women who possess this quality in any considerable degree, are enabled, by that readiness of invention, and that vivacity of fancy, which they inherit from nature, both to paint real, and to imagine fictitious characters and events adapted to such compositions.

But there is no species of composition in which women are more qualified to excel, or in which indeed they have so much excelled, as in that of epistolary writing. There is, in the letters of women endued with this talent, a certain sprightliness and gaiety, a certain ease and spirit, which are scarcely ever attained by the other sex in the same degree. The Letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montague have, in these respects, as well as in a justness of sentiment, and elegance of style, been perhaps never equalled in any language.

LET-

* This Lady has now changed her maiden name.

LETTER IV.

As that vivacity of imagination, with which nature hath endued many of you, my fair countrywomen, when under the controul of temperate judgement, and at the same time accompanied with a talent for composition, qualifies you either for becoming entertaining writers, or, which is of far greater consequence, for becoming, under the influence of good temper, agreeable companions to those with whom you are connected in society, may I presume to enquire in general, what proportion of this last mentioned faculty of judgment is found in the female character?

If I were possessed of those intellectual scales, in which Pope in his Rape of the Lock, weighs 'the men's wits against the ladies hair,' and were, in one of those scales to weigh the judgment of the men, and in the other that of the women, a just notion might no doubt be formed of the degree in which the one preponderated over the other. I am very doubtful, however, whether the use of such a pair of scales would

would be much for the credit of my own sex. The possession of such an instrument would, at any rate, in many cases lead to inconvenient and dangerous experiments; for in every dispute betwixt a man and his wife, in matters of reason and argument, the scales would be immediately hung out; and the wits of the poor husband, like the fate of Hector in the Iliad, and of Satan in Paradise Lost, might unhappily kick the beam, and in one unlucky moment deprive the man of a sovereignty, he would otherwise have all his life exercised over his consort.

As I wish therefore, for the honour of my own sex, to explode the use of the intellectual balance above-mentioned, I think it proper, from prudential reasons, to avoid making any comparative estimate, betwixt the judgement of the gentlemen and the ladies, founded upon facts and examples; which, should the result prove unfavourable to my own sex, would expose them to the mortification arising from a conviction of inferiority; a mortification, which every man will be solicitous to avoid. I shall content myself therefore, with observing, that the quality of which I am treating, is often conspicuously eminent both in the characters and writings of many of the Ladies; a declaration, in which, I am confident, every one of my own sex, who is possessed of ingenuity and candour, will very readily concur. I believe there are few married men of this description, connected with sensible women, who will refuse to acknowledge themselves indebted, sometimes upon very

very critical occasions, to the judicious and salutary advice of their wives.

A solidity of judgment may be as really and effectually, though not so extensively and conspicuously displayed, in the management of a family, and in the conduct of domestic concerns, as in the government of a state; and of the judgement and prudence discovered in the former department, many of you, my fair readers, it is but justice to add, afford indisputable and striking examples.

Of the judgement requisite in the various species of composition, there are not wanting many illustrious specimens in your sex. Mrs Trimmer's sacred History in particular, is not only well intended, but may be regarded as a judicious performance, well calculated to allure young minds to the study of the books of inspiration; and Mrs Chapone's Letters on the Improvement of the Mind, are equally remarkable for the judgement discovered in them by the fair author, and for the elegance of the composition. But after all, it must be acknowledged, that it is impossible to make a fair and just estimate of the intellectual talents and accomplishments of women, compared with those of the other sex, unless their education were conducted upon a far more liberal and comprehensive plan than is generally adopted at present; upon a plan calculated to call forth, to excite, and to invigorate the natural energies of the female mind, which at present lie dormant, are misapplied and perverted in their exertions, or are wasted in frivolous gratifi-

cations and pursuits, as incompatible with true pleasure and rational enjoyment, as with their intellectual and moral improvement. Until we shall see a system of female education judiciously concerted, generally adopted, and steadily prosecuted, we can never hope for that advantageous display of the female character, which such a system could not fail to produce, or for that perfection of excellence, at which the female mind is capable of arriving.

LET-

LETTER V.

TASTE was the last of those faculties that I mentioned, as entering into the composition of the intellectual character of women. Of this talent, Ladies, it is generally allowed, that the ingenious part of your sex, whose minds are properly cultivated, possess a very large proportion. The delicate organization of your frame, the vivacity of your imagination, and the tenderness of your passions, all conspire to produce a sensibility and refinement of taste in your sex, beyond what is usually found in ours.

The objects of this internal sense, which we distinguish by the name of taste, are innumerable; and the importance of these objects admits of an almost infinite variety of degrees. The fine arts, poetry, painting, music, sculpture, eloquence, and architecture, afford the noblest field for the exercise, and cultivation of this mental faculty; but its jurisdiction is not confined even to these. In order to shew its unlimited extent, it exercises, upon particular occa-

sions, its sovereign power over the minutest and most trifling objects, as well as over the grandest, and most beautiful. Thus, a lady who is qualified to judge with a nice discernment of the beauties of a poem, or a picture, will sometimes, by the exercise of the same faculty, upon a more trivial object, the shape and colour of a gown for instance, or the size and ornaments of a head-dress, (if I may venture to call those objects trivial) discover the nicety of her taste; and if she happen to be possessed of beauty, rank and fortune, her verdict will at once give law to the fashion, from which there will lie no appeal. Though this sympathy of the grand and beautiful with the frivolous, sometimes takes place in the female character, the connection is by no means a necessary one. On the contrary, I am inclined to think, that a connoisseur in poetry or painting, whether male or female, will seldom possess equal knowledge in the elegance of dress, and will seldom feel much inclination to display it.

As notwithstanding the corruption and frivolousness of the times, there is still a fund of good sense in the nation, so is there a vein of good taste, (a quality indeed, usually connected with good sense) prevalent among many in the higher ranks of the state. If, indeed, we were to estimate the national taste by the national morality, with which it has a real connection, we should not be apt to entertain the most favourable opinion of it. But it may be observed,

observed, that good taste, generally prevalent in a state, provided that state undergo no revolution from external violence, can only be gradually extinguished; but after the extinction of morality, the gradual extinction of taste will slowly but assuredly follow. Thus it was in the decline of the Roman empire. The arts, for some time, survived the morals of the people, but in consequence of the decay of the latter, the former had greatly declined, before the irruption of the barbarous nations completed the destruction both of arts and empire.

It is no part of the design of these letters, to enquire with any degree of minuteness into the morals of the present age; though I shall have occasion, in the course of them, to make some transient remarks upon this subject. In the meantime, it is some comfort to reflect, that excepting in some of the more superficial and uninteresting characters of high life, a general good taste in the arts yet prevails among us, and the fine arts, the proper subjects of its exercise, are generally cultivated, understood, and relished. While some of you, Ladies, have justly acquired a very considerable degree of reputation by your poetical productions; others have very honourably employed their leisure, and their critical talents, in elucidating those strokes of nature and character, and those higher beauties of poetry, exhibited in the writings of authors, that have been long contemplated with admiration. Of these, the observations on the genius and writings of Shakespeare,

deserve particular notice, as the performance is not only an illustrious monument of the exquisite judgement and taste of the fair author *; but is written with a portion of that spirit, which animated the celebrated bard, whose compositions are the subjects of her criticisms.

* The late Mrs. Montague.

LET-

LETTER VI.

IT will readily occur to you, my fair readers, that the remarks which I have hitherto made on those leading faculties of the mind, imagination, judgment and taste, as they appear in the intellectual character of women, have a reference principally to the actual exertion of those talents in composition.

As there are few however of either of the sexes, who possess the talents that are necessary to a mastery in this art, and not many who are capable of making a just estimate of the various abilities of those who attempt to excel in it, I shall take notice of one very important sphere, in which the intellectual character of women may probably be more advantageously, as it is certainly more generally displayed, than in composition, and that is, the sphere of common life.

In order to qualify you for choosing the part you are to act in this sphere, and at the same time, in order to enable you to act it properly, no small share of that faculty which we distinguish by the name of

judgment, is indispensibly necessary. In the prudent choice of this part, a lady has not only an opportunity afforded her of discovering her discernment; but in the steady and spirited performance of it, her good sense and resolution may be conspicuously manifested. That valuable quality, indeed, which we call good sense, is the result of judicious observations and just reflections, both upon other peoples conduct, and upon our own; and its great utility and importance in life, sufficiently prove, that good natural parts, and especially that shrewdness and sense which are the gift of nature, are far more valuable in common life, than the acquisition of learning by industry and application. When we consider, how many of both sexes, in the various ranks of life, fail in the attainment of the several objects they pursue, some through a natural imbecility of mind, falling short of the mark, and others, through imprudence and temerity overshooting it, we shall readily perceive the superior utility of those natural talents, which at once suggest the proper means, and with intuitive sagacity adapt them to the end proposed to be accomplished by them. Even in the contracted circle of domestic life, there are not wanting opportunities of discovering a readiness of invention in supplying expedients, and a justness and perspicacity of discernment in their selection for a particular purpose. A lady may often discover the solidity of her judgment, and the elegance of her taste as really, and for the most part more usefully, in the management of her family concerns, than

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in critical commentaries upon the works of Plato and Aristotle.

Let me not be understood, as having the remotest intention to throw out any invidious reflection, or to draw any invidious comparisons to the disadvantage of those Ladies, whose genius qualifies them for, and whose leisure admits of their pursuing, the more difficult and intricate paths of literature. I only mean to suggest the natural and proper sphere of women in general, which will be afterwards more particularly defined, and to affirm, that much good sense and judgment may be exerted in the domestic spheres of life, and are necessary for discharging the duties of those spheres, with general approbation. A more vigorous and extensive imagination, and a more penetrating judgment, as well as a peculiar conformation of the intellectual powers, are no doubt requisite to qualify the fair adventurer, for acquiring eminence in the sublime walks of literature and science, than are requisite, for attaining skill in the management of family affairs. But it must still be confessed, that though the objects strike not the eye so much by their splendour, in the last case as in the first, the more general utility of the latter justly renders them the objects of more general pursuit; and it is certain, that a very considerable portion of intellectual ability may be discovered in the judicious management of domestic affairs, and in the regular and resolute performance of the duties of private life. In those more elevated spheres in which women have been destined

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to move, in different ages, it cannot be denied, that several of them have, in the arts of government, and in profound plans of political wisdom, discovered a compass of thought, and a solidity and extent of judgment, which have hardly been surpassed by the ablest princes and politicians of the other sex. Of the highest degree of intellectual talents, signally manifested in the government of their respective kingdoms, we need not hesitate to produce the illustrious Elizabeth of England, and Catharine II. of Russia, as distinguished examples.

LET-

LETTER VII.

THOUGH, from the delicacy of the subject, and the difficulty of the discussion of it, I have purposely declined making any direct and comparative estimate of the intellectual abilities of the two sexes, I am under no difficulty, Ladies, in affirming, that to whatever sex the scale of intellectual ability may incline, that of moral excellence preponderates, in my opinion, greatly in favour of yours. In this great department, indeed by far the more important of the two, you have, it should seem, in general, an indisputable and decided pre-eminence. It is a truth as notorious as melancholy, that the principles of morality and religion, are in the minds of many young men of the present age, in the higher ranks of life in particular, shaken from the very foundation. In consequence of the general relaxation and depravity of manners, libertine sentiments and principles are adapted by many unhappy youths of the present times, in order to give a sanction to vicious indulgence; and are too easily and successfully propagated among their

their companions and friends. I have not heard, however, that principles of this kind are adopted or propagated by your sex. The history of Fidelia indeed, in the Adventurer, whether considered as real or fictitious, would lead one to imagine, that the author of it was of opinion, that there are female as well as male free-thinkers; and that some of your sex have very loose notions both of morality and religion. It is to be observed, however, that Fidelia had been educated in these principles by her father, who was a professed freethinker, and that her lover, by availing himself of them, and by addressing himself to the weakest part of her nature, had effected her ruin. It may, I think, be supposed, that there are few parents so inconsiderate, or so profligate, as to instil maxims into the minds of their daughters, that might corrupt their hearts, or tend to produce dissolute manners; whatever contagion they might contract from the heedless effusions of indiscretion and folly, and from the baneful influence of example. Most gentlemen of fashion are, by a sense of decency and good breeding, and by a respect to the Ladies, perhaps more than by any other cause, prevented from advancing any licentious principles in their presence, that might contribute to debauch or vitiate their morals. Nor do these gentlemen deserve much credit upon this account; for it may be justly presumed, that they are restrained from disseminating their immoral principles in the company of women, by an involuntary deference to their virtue, which would not

not tamely bear the insult. And indeed, Ladies, whenever, or by whomsoever, immoral and licentious sentiments are advanced in your hearing, you may be assured, that the person who presumes to utter them, must be of a very worthless character, and may be justly suspected of designs which he dares not avow. I trust, my amiable friends, that your good sense, your spirit, your virtue, your honour, and I will add your pride, (for in this case pride is laudable) will always prove an effectual security to you against such rudeness, and incline you to treat the man with merited contempt and scorn, who is capable of injuring the dignity and delicacy of your sex, by attempting to shake the pillars, and undermine the foundation of your virtue. In the mean time, it is but doing you justice to acknowledge, that into whatever indiscretions or criminal compliances, any of your sex may have been betrayed, either by the violence of their own passions, the force of temptation, or the artifices and villainy of our sex, your moral and religious principles are much less corrupted than ours.—— That all your sentiments and principles, may ever be strictly virtuous and honourable, is the sincere and and fervent wish of

Your most zealous Friend.

LETTER VIII.

AS your principles, Ladies, are less corrupted than ours, your conduct, it may be presumed, is less culpable. Justice and impartiality indeed require, that I should acknowledge that this is really the case.—The impiety and profligacy, the rapacity and venality, the corruption and falsehood, so prevalent in public life, the chicanery and fraud, the treachery and oppression, so much practised in private, are vices little known among your sex, and prevail among few of them, and in a very inferior degree. It will be said perhaps by those, who are not inclined to think of your conduct with much candour, that the dispositions to these vices exist in the minds of many of your sex, as they too evidently appear in the conduct of a great number of ours; and that they lie latent in your minds, merely from a want of scope and opportunity for their exertion. This remark, though we should allow it to be partly true, will not account for women's being comparatively free from those enormous vices, which rage in the hearts of so many indi-

individuals of our sex, and often break forth with such destructive violence, without supposing that the propensity to such vices, is in the female character much weaker and far more easily controuled than in the male. If these dispositions were as malignant and virulent in their nature in the minds of women, as they are in those of men, female ingenuity would easily devise opportunities, both of exerting and gratifying them. Indeed, could we suppose the inclination to these vices, as strong in the female sex as in the male, such disorder and confusion, such misery and mischief, would ensue from the jarring passions and interests of individuals of both sexes, as would probably end in the dissolution of legal government. But thanks to the candid, gentle and benignant nature of my fair countrywomen, this is not the case. You, Ladies, have your foibles, and your faults, which I shall have occasion to mention in another part of this work; and which I shall touch with as tender a hand, as a regard to truth will permit. But the vices of your sex, (one or two excepted, which will be afterwards taken notice of) are by no means so atrocious in their nature, or so destructive in their consequences, as ours; and of those to which some of you are addicted, no small mitigation of the guilt must be allowed, in consequence of the influence of example, and of temptation and seduction upon the part of our sex. If indeed you were only in a great measure free from those vices above mentioned, which so much disgrace us, your praise would

would still be considerable: but your merit is not merely of the negative kind. Without intending to flatter you, I do not hesitate to deliver it as my opinion, that from all the observations, I have ever been able to make, both on your moral and religious character, you have more benevolence and sympathy *, as

* Of those amiable virtues of benevolence and sympathy, the female nature seems to be peculiarly susceptible. The kind and sympathetic affections are congenial to the softness and gentleness of the female sex, and naturally flow from the vivacity of their imaginations, and from the warmth and tenderness of their hearts. I am sufficiently aware, however, that our sex will not so easily resign the palm of benevolence to the other; but I apprehend, that from general experience, it will be found justly due.

As my mind is very strongly impressed with a conviction of the superiority of women over men, in moral excellence in general, I cannot, without good reasons, be induced to adopt a different persuasion, though I am perfectly conscious, that my opinion upon this point will be controverted by many of my own sex, whose abilities and experience qualify them for making a proper estimate of the superiority in question. This consideration, I acknowledge, may reasonably make me diffident of my own judgement. But as the truth of the above mentioned assertion can only be proved by facts and examples; and as the observation and experience of different persons on this subject may be very different, every one is entitled to form his opinion from the facts and examples that come under his view. One historical fact of real importance, and peculiarly conducive to the establishment of the point I have above maintained, I beg leave to state, as highly honourable to the softer sex, from Mr Ledyard's Travels through the Northern Kingdoms of Europe.

" To a woman," says he, " whether civilized or savage, I never addressed myself in the language of decency and friendship, without receiving a decent and friendly answer. With man it hath often been otherwise. In wandering over the barren plains of inhospitable Denmark, through honest Sweden, and frozen Lapland, rude and churlish Finland, unprincipled Russia, and the wide spread regions of the wandering Tartar, if hungry, dry, cold, wet or sick, the women have ever been friendly to me. And to add to this virtue, so worthy the appellation of benevolence, these actions have been

as well as more self denial, and self command, than we usually possess †.

Your piety too, is in general more sincere and more fervent than ours ‡. You are indeed for the most

been performed in so free and so kind a manner, that if I was dry, I drank the sweetest draught, and if hungry, I eat the coarse morsel with double relish."

Desirous as I am to sanction my own sentiments still farther upon this subject, by the opinion of the celebrated German Poet Kotzebue, I shall quote a passage, from the work called, "The most remarkable Year of his Life," giving an account of his escape from the guards, who were appointed to conduct him to Siberia, the place of his exile, and of his adventure at the Castle of Stockmanshaff, after that escape.

"I entered the garden," says he, "determined to proceed to the house. A figure in white stood at a little distance before me. How fortunate, said I to myself, should this prove to be a female! Women are compassionate creatures, ever ready to pity and soothe distress of every kind: I will approach her. I proceeded and discovered, that it was merely a statue of Neptune, placed in the centre of a small pond."

Though Kotzebue mistook this statue for a woman, he found some females in the Castle, whose kind and sympathetic offices served to confirm the favourable opinion he entertained of womankind.

† As a proof that women possess more self denial and self command in several instances than our sex, it may be observed, that while many young men, instead of restraining, give full swing to their licentious passions, which they indulge without controul; women, on the contrary, prompted by their natural modesty, fortified by education and habit, impose a salutary restraint upon every passion inconsistent with that modesty. If this observation is allowed to be just, (and I think it can hardly be controverted) and the truth of Solomon's observation be likewise admitted, that *he who ruleth his own spirit is greater than he who taketh a city*, the claim to superior magnanimity as well as benevolence, must also be conceded to the Ladies, mortifying as the concession will appear to many of our sex, who are inclined to appropriate this virtue to themselves.

‡ In confirmation of the sentiments above advanced, with regard to the superiority of the moral and religious character of the softer sex over that

most part, more susceptible of religious impressions; and have much more of the devotional turn than our sex. Hence it is, that by an injudicious and intemperate indulgence of this disposition, some amiable creatures have been betrayed into the extravagancies of fanaticism; and by giving way to the fervour of an unbridled imagination upon religious subjects, they have acquired the character of visionaries, enthusiasts, and devotees. Many of our sex, I grant, as well as of yours, have often run into the wildest excesses of enthusiasm; but in general, I think your sex

of ours, I think it of importance to observe, that the most consummate judge and model of human excellence, that ever appeared in our nature, the Divine Author of our religion, distinguished several individuals of that sex, upon account of the good dispositions of their hearts, as the peculiar objects of his esteem and affection. With Lazarus and his sisters Martha and Mary, he seems to have lived on terms of intimate friendship; and while he gently chides the too officious zeal of the former sister, he commends the other as having chosen the better part, which should not be taken away from her. We find our Saviour bestowing commendation on several women upon account of their faith, gratitude and love; and when he was brought to the cross by the inhuman barbarity of his countrymen, we observe a company of devout and sympathetic females following the mournful procession, and bewailing his undeserved fate, with the most bitter lamentations; while the heroic sufferer himself, rising above the sense of his own personal calamities, directs their attention to the future woes of his unhappy country. 'Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children.' I shall only farther observe, that as several devout women were the first in paying the last sad duty to the memory of their beloved Master, their pious intentions were recognized by the angel, whom they met at his tomb, who dispelled their fears, and assured them of his resurrection; and that Mary Magdalene, who had been a signal object of our Saviour's beneficence, was honoured to be the first witness of that resurrection, of which her Master, addressing her with affectionate benignity, desired her to inform his disciples.

sex are in greater hazard of falling into this extreme, from a greater propensity in your nature to devotional affections and exercises; which, when under the direction of reason, (as among the more sensible part of women it will always be,) contributes to form and accomplish the religious character. Those eminent virtues of patience and resignation in particular, strange as it may seem, are for the most part, far more conspicuously manifested in the female character, than in the male. There is a certain impatience and irritability of temper in the characters of many of our sex, which instead of inclining them to acquiesce in the chastisement of affliction without repining, disposes them to spurn the rod, and to be restive under the yoke that galls and oppresses them. Those harsh medicines, that should mitigate the fierceness of our nature, and allay the violence of our passions, very often rankle the festering mind, and render it more sensible of its sores, and more fretful under its sufferings. On the contrary, affliction commonly softens and subdues the female heart. Meeting with a milder and more benign temper, it naturally inspires patience under irremediable calamity; and disposes the fair sufferer to submit with calm resignation to the divine will. Of this quiet, uncomplaining disposition of mind, I have observed many affecting examples among women, which do equal credit to their piety and good temper. I have seen the lily withering on its stalk, and declining its head under the showers of heaven. I have seen the rose

perceptibly fading on the pallid cheek, and the vermilion lip gradually losing its brightness. I have seen the lamp of life glimmering, and upon the point of extinction; while a ray of joy now and then broke forth for a little, and rekindled its expiring beam. I have seen the female saint, decaying with disease, yet submitting to sickness and pain with resignation and fortitude, and sitting like "patience on a monument, smiling at grief." These striking indications of a pious and resigned disposition, triumphing over the horrors of the tomb, are incontestible proofs of the superiority of your religious character over ours.

Permit me, Ladies, to illustrate and exemplify this superiority, by giving you a slight sketch of the history of a celebrated Queen, in the following Letter.

LETTER IX.

*HISTORY OF MARGARET, QUEEN OF SCOTLAND**.

MARGARET, Queen of Scotland, was the daughter of Prince Edward, the son of Edmund Ironside, who, after fighting several battles with Canute King of Denmark, with various success, for the crown of England, at last found himself obliged to divide the kingdom with the Usurper. After the extinction of the Danish race of kings, by the death of Hardicnute, and the restoration of the Saxon line in the person of Edward the Confessor, (a younger brother of Edmund Ironside;)—the Confessor recalled his nephew Edward, from exile in Hungary, to which he and his brother Edwin had been driven by Canute, and destined him for his successor. But Prince Edward having died soon after his return to England, and

* I am indebted for the materials of this little History to Sir David Dalrymple's (Lord Hales') Annals of Scotland.

his uncle having nominated William, Duke of Normandy, his cousin, as heir to the crown; Edgar Atheling, son to the deceased Prince, a youth of very contemptible understanding, was obliged, after the Norman invasion, to fly with his sisters, Margaret and Christian, and a few friends attached to their fortunes, into Scotland, where they implored the protection of Malcolm III. sirnamed Canmore, against the power of the Conqueror. Malcolm, who though wholly illiterate, was a Prince of great personal courage, and not destitute of generosity; finding himself now firmly seated on the throne of his ancestors, by the death of the late usurper Macbeth, the murderer of his father Duncan, whom, aided by the gallant Macduff, he had defeated and slain, readily granted the protection solicited by his royal guests. Edgar Atheling, his sisters, and their friends, met with a very hospitable reception at the Scottish court; and the king, captivated by the charms and accomplishments of Margaret, from being her protector and patron, soon became her admirer and lover.—Margaret had not been long in Scotland, when Malcolm, instigated, perhaps partly by ambition, and by the desire of succeeding as her husband to the throne of England, whenever a happy combination of time and circumstances should concur to favour his pretensions, and partly by personal attachment, solicited this Princess in marriage, and obtained the object of his suit.

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Though Malcolm was disappointed in his ambitious views, (if he had any) by the valour and policy of the Norman Conqueror, he was not disappointed in any expectation he had formed of the merit of his queen. In her, he found an accomplished woman, if we consider the age in which she lived, an amiable companion, and a judicious and valuable friend, whose intellectual ability qualified her for assisting her husband in the task of government, and whose tender sympathy soothed his publlc and his private cares. Malcolm, indeed, was so thoroughly convinced of her political talents, that he consulted her upon all occasions, and committed the internal administration of his kingdom chiefly to her. In the conduct of this great department, she discovered a masculine energy of mind, beyond what is usually found in her sex; in some other parts of her character, she discovered the not unpleasing peculiarities of the woman. Fond of splendour and magnificence in every thing that related to dress, furniture, equipage, and the elegance and ornaments of the table, she contributed, by her polite and engaging manners, to embellish a court which her virtues served to adorn. Her attachment to her husband, who was deeply sensible of her worth, was sincere, tender and constant; her affection to her children warm and unremitting; and she discovered this affection by the most earnest and assiduous attention to their education. Her piety and beneficence were active and vigorous through the whole

of her life *; and the closing scene of that life in particular, was eminently distinguished by her conjugal and maternal affection; by her exemplary patience and fortitude under the severest trials, by an animated and ardent devotion, and by a perfect resignation to the Divine will. That she was free from the errors and superstitions of the times cannot be pretended, and could not be expected. But, though her understanding was in some measure beclouded by the darkness of the age in which she lived, her zeal was sincere, her mind was pure, and her life was distinguished by piety and beneficence. Exalted in

* Lord Hales mentions some acts of Margaret's humility and charity, such as her preparing food for nine indigent orphan children, and feeding them, the washing the feet of six persons every evening, and the serving the poor at the table on her bended knees, in which he observes, there is to us an appearance of ostentatious trifling. There is in this remark, a kind of censure, mitigated indeed, by the word *appearance*, which I could have wished the learned and ingenious Annalist to have still farther softened, by tracing the motives from which those actions were performed. That they were really performed from the purest and best motives, we have certainly every reason to believe, when it is considered, that Margaret's exemplary life and triumphant death, were every way conformable to her Christian profession. The washing the feet of a certain number of persons every evening, will, I am sensible, appear to some, mean and ludicrous, and to others a frivolous, as it was no doubt an unnecessary, and a too literal imitation of an action, which, as performed by the Divine Author of our religion, was merely symbolical. But, when it is observed, that this action, considered as performed by Margaret, was prompted by a desire of imitating the greatest and best example that ever was exhibited in our nature, and that the others were dictated by a principle of love and obedience to that Master, who has declared, that he will regard every instance of kindness and benevolence, shewn to any of the least of his brethren, as done to himself, we shall find much more reason for admiration and love of a character of such transcendent excellence, than for our censure of a very pardonable weakness.

in intellectual talents, and in polemical skill, above all the laity and most of the ecclesiastics of those days, she displayed her superiority in formal disputes with the priests and monks, to which she challenged them, and in which she always came off conqueror. She attempted however, to convince her antagonists, not by the weapons of persecution, adopted and exercised some ages afterwards, in the Christian church, with such diabolical rage; weapons against which the gentle nature of Margaret revolted, but by arguments deduced, as she apprehended at least, from reason and scripture. While she affected in general a more religious observation of the Sabbath, and a more frequent celebration of the communion, she no doubt recommended and enforced the observance of some unimportant ceremonies by those arguments. These were the few natural and unavoidable blemishes in her character. Let charity therefore, draw the veil over these slight shades, in consideration of her consummate worth; and let the eye of discernment trace with admiration, the bright assemblage of virtues, which shone forth with such superior lustre around her setting sun.

We have a very pathetic account of this affecting scene, given by her biographer Turgot, who was her confessor, and was at the same time honoured with her confidence; with which, accompanied by some of Lord Hales' observations, I shall conclude this Letter. After a long discourse on her spiritual state, Turgot tells us, that lying on her death bed, she thus

thus addressed him *:—" Farewell; my life draws to a close; but you may survive me long. To you I commit the charge of my children. Teach them, above all things, to love and fear God; and whenever you see any of them attain to the height of earthly grandeur, O! then in an especial manner, be to them as a father and a guide. Admonish, and if need be, reprove them; lest they be swelled with the pride of momentary glory, through avarice offend God, or by reason of the prosperity of this world, become careless of eternal life. This in the presence of him, who is our only witness, I beseech you to promise and to perform." Thus far Turgot. What follows I copy from Lord Hales—" This great queen was humble and self-abased: She judged with more severity of herself than of others: She affectionately reproached her confessor, for his want of vigilance in discovering her faults. And now that we have seen the fruits of this excellent woman, in meekness, active virtue, and mercy; we are authorised to pronounce that her piety was sincere. By a tedious and painful indisposition, she was brought very low. During a short interval of ease, she devoutly received the communion: Soon after, her anguish of body returned, with redoubled violence. She stretched herself upon her couch, and calmly waited for the moment of dissolution. Cold, and in the agonies of death, she ceased not to put up her supplications to Heaven!"

* As I have not access at present to the original, I have transcribed Lord Hales' Translation of Turgot, which is very elegant.

Heaven!" These, according to Turgot, were some of her words—" Have mercy on me, O God; according to the multitude of thy tender mercies, blot out mine iniquities. Make me to hear joy and gladness, that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy holy spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise. Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion, build thou the walls of Jerusalem." " At that moment," says Lord Hales, " her son Edgar, returning from the army in Northumberland, where her husband and her son were slain, before the Castle of Alnwick, approached her couch." " How fares it," said she, " with the king and my Edward?" The youth stood silent; " I know all," cried she, " I know all: By this holy cross, by your filial affection, I adjure you tell me the truth." He answered, " Your husband and your son are both slain?" Lifting her eyes and hands to Heaven, she said, " Praise and blessing be to thee, Almighty God, that thou hast been pleased to make me endure so bitter anguish, in the hour of my departure, thereby as I trust, to purify me in some measure from the corruption of my sins; and thou Lord Jesus Christ, who through the will of the Father, hast enlightened the world by thy death, O deliver me." While pronouncing these words " deliver me," she expired, rejoicing in the hope of a blessed immortality.

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LETTER X.

THAT your sex, Ladies, have a real superiority over ours both in the principles and practice of religion and moral virtue, I have already allowed, and the piety often observable in the female character, has been sufficiently exemplified in the preceeding history, and might be exemplified in many other instances. The question is, How shall we account for the superiority above mentioned? Shall we suppose, that there was a smaller portion of the malignant poison of that fruit—

" Whose mortal taste
" Brought death into the world, and all our woe,
" With loss of Eden,"

originally communicated to your sex than to ours? Or shall we say, that in your original formation, there was infused some antidote of peculiar power to repel the poison? I am afraid, Ladies, that neither of these conjectures will solve the difficulty; for we have very good reason to believe, that our first Mother,

mother, of the two had rather the greater share of the guilt, as we are assured, that *the woman, being deceived, was in the transgression;* and though the gallantry of Adam cannot be much commended, in throwing the blame upon his poor deluded wife, we cannot, I am afraid, acquit own venerable mother, of having set the first example of that *undue influence* over her husband, which has been since so often and so successfully practised by her daughters. I am, therefore, inclined to attribute that superiority over us in point of moral excellence, which you certainly possess, to your native modesty, to your education, and to your particular situation, habits, and modes of life.

You owe this superiority, partly to that modesty, which the hand of nature has deeply implanted in your minds, and which even the effects of the primæval apostacy have not been able to efface. This modesty, indeed, is in no inconsiderable degree engraven upon every mind, to whatever sex it may belong, before it is obliterated by vicious indulgence; but the impression seems to be deeper upon your minds than upon ours. The ingenuous blush and the lovely confusion which appear in the countenance of the innocent maiden, whose sentiments are uncorrupted by depraved, or debased by vulgar company, are pleasing and striking indications of that amiable quality which is so characteristical of the fair sex, and which is one of the strongest safeguards of their virtue.

This quality, is likewise fortified in the female mind very often, and very considerably, by education;

tion; I say, very often, and very considerably; for female education is by no means generally conducted on such a plan, as to secure to the fair sex the advantages that would redound to them, from the possession of this enchanting quality. But, faulty as that system of education is, the virtue of which I am treating, is at any rate, more encouraged by it, than by the education of the other sex. A young man indeed, if he is not educated in principles of the strictest virtue, will, upon his first outset in life, run the greatest hazard of having this natural barrier of chastity broken down, should he be unfortunate enough to be led into the company of those profligates who, having extinguished the sense of shame in their own minds, will by laughing him out of countenance gradually extinguish it in his. This, however, can never happen, except to the most worthless of your sex, originally seduced and corrupted by ours; with whom those Ladies, who are virtuously educated, and who are accustomed to good company, are in no hazard of associating. Even that reserve, to which as being a quality suitable to your sex, you are trained from your childhood, is favourable to your virtue; by keeping you at a distance from vice, and by inspiring a conscious awe and dread of offending against that modesty and decorum, which we expect to find in the female character.

But there is not a more effectual preservative of your virtue, than that regard to character and reputation, and that nice sense of chastity and honour, which

which, wherever the education of your sex is conducted with any degree of judgment or propriety, are carefully instilled into the female mind, and operate very powerfully on their conduct in life; not only in restraining young women from actual guilt, but from those levities and indiscretions which might hazard the loss of reputation, on which our sex puts so high a value, and which once lost, is known to be irrecoverable. I said, that your particular situation was likewise more favourable to the cultivation and practice of moral virtue, than ours. Being placed in your early years under the eye of your parents and governesses, you are by their vigilance and care preserved from vice and temptation, into which young men, if not possessed of good dispositions, and virtuously educated, too commonly precipitate themselves with heedless temerity upon their first appearance on the stage of the world. It may likewise be observed, that women having, in every period of life, a less extensive intercourse with the world, and a more restricted and more select association with us than we have with one another, are in much less hazard than we, of having their principles corrupted by the conversation, or their practice contaminated by the example of those with whom they mingle in society.

Your habits and modes of life too, are more favourable than ours to the cultivation and acquisition of moral excellence. Happily secluded by your parents and guardians, in your earlier years, from a promiscuous intercourse with our sex, the choice of your

your associates and friends at a riper age, will, both by inclination and habit, be regulated by the principles which governed you in the first selection, and you will run little risk of catching the contagion of vice in any great degree, from the company you keep.

These favourable circumstances, peculiar to your sex, will sufficiently account for your superiority over ours, in point of moral virtue.

LET-

LETTER XI.

HAVING acknowledged, Ladies, and endeavoured to account for the superiority, both in the principles and practice of moral virtue, which your sex unquestionably possess over ours, it will be no unentertaining or incurious disquisition to enquire, in what estimation you have been held by your male companions, in different countries and ages.

One should indeed imagine, that the moral virtues and amiable qualities women possess in so high a degree, would in all ages and among all nations, have rendered them the objects both of respect and of love. But history and experience have shewn, that this hath by no means been always the case. In fact, the respect with which your sex hath been treated, and the influence they have possessed, hath not only been very different, in different countries and ages, but in some instances, hath in the same country, at different periods, been as opposite as can well be imagined. The estimation in which women are held, and the respect paid to them, will in general be found

to depend upon the state of civilization, the nature of the government, the liberality of sentiment generally entertained, and the freedom of intercourse, which may happen to subsist betwixt the sexes. In savage life, women are for the most part the slaves of the tyrant man. Sovereign Lord of the brute creation, a part of which he tames for his use, and a part of which he kills with his bow and arrow for his food, he fancies all the different ranks of being, with which he is acquainted, created for his conveniency or his pastime; and easily extends his unresisted dominion over the weaker part of his own species, which with stern authority and wanton cruelty, he renders subservient to his pleasures, his necessities, and his wants. Thus the North American savage traverses the trackless desert with his gun and his bow, attended by a troop of females, whom he honours to be the carriers of the venison he has caught, and who receive as much of it for their hire, as his voracious appetite may happen to leave, or his niggardly bounty may think proper to bestow. After all, it must be acknowledged, that there have been examples of nations, which though not savage, were however in a state of great rudeness, among whom women have been more respected and honoured, than even among the most civilized nations. Such were the antient Germans and Britons, while the religion of the Druids prevailed among the latter. Tacitus, in his Treatise on the Manners of the Germans, tells us, that women were held in the highest estimation among them; that some

of

of them were regarded as prophetesses, and that others of them, as Velleda in the time of Vespasian, were treated with divine honours; while they highly honoured Aurinia and many others, though they did not deify them. The same author tells us, that some of the nobler virgins presided in particular states; that they were considered by their enemies as the most valuable hostages they could obtain; and that both among the German and British Druids, the married women and their children, used to accompany the men to battle; and that by their howlings they animated them to the combat, while they fought in defence of what was dearer to them than life. He farther informs us, that as a proof of the estimation in which women were held by the ancient Germans, dowries were given by young men to their mistresses, instead of receiving such along with them. Modesty, he observes, was early instilled into their minds, and seemed congenial to them. Adultery, which was rarely known among them, was punished with such severity, and with such marks of ignominy, as co-operating with the general purity of manners, effectually prevented the progress of this enormity; the manner of chastising which, I will not offend the delicacy of my fair readers so far as to relate. It is in this general purity and simplicity of manners therefore, and in the freedom of government established among the ancient Germans and Britons, that we are to look for the causes of the high respect shewn by them to women, beyond what we meet with among the most polished people of modern times; who, ex-

cept a few chattering coxcombs, unworthy of their notice, have not yet agreed to raise them to the rank of divinities, or even of prophetesses, though doubtless many of them utter true predictions to their heedless husbands, but " like Cassandra, prophesy in vain." Notwithstanding the respect shewn to women, however, among the Germans and Britons, it will still be found true in general, that in savage life, and in ages approaching to savage life, they will be least respected and most enslaved; and that in the most civilized periods of society, as will be afterwards shewn, they will be held in the highest estimation and honour.

LET-

LETTER XII.

I MUST beg leave, Ladies, however, to remind you, that every stage and form of civil society, is by no means favourable to your sex. On the contrary, there are certain forms of social life, and certain false refinements in pleasure practised under those forms, which are more prejudicial to the honour, virtue and happiness of women, and which more effectually degrade them from the important station which they ought to occupy in society, than even the barbarous manners of savage life. That splendid but cruel servitude, in which so many women are detained, in the seraglios of Eastern Monarchs, where they are for ever secluded from their friends, and from all that is dear to them in life, as well as deprived of every opportunity of gratifying their natural inclinations, and where the unhappy victims are constrained to resign their violated forms to the detested embraces of an execrable tyrant, is the greatest degradation, from their natural station in society, to which

your sex was ever subjected. When we consider this humiliating and wretched condition, and the intrigues and stratagems to which, at the hazard of life, and in spite of high walls and eunuch guards, it gives birth, we cannot wonder much at the frailties of women in such circumstances *; or at the declaration of Solomon, who, we are told, kept 300 wives and 700 concubines in his seraglio, when he assures us, that in all this number he had not found one woman, who, as I understand the passage, loved him, and was at the same time worthy of his love †.

Nothing indeed, can be more injurious to the dignity of your sex, and to the respect which is due to it from the other, than the practice of Polygamy, so universally prevalent in all the Eastern countries, where the Mahometan faith is established; and which is not only countenanced, but expressly allowed by the doctrines of the Koran. That grand impostor, Mahomet, the author of them, whose memory deserves to be treated with execration by the whole of your sex, has in fact, by this single permission, con-

* Though, I trust, I shall not be considered as an apologist, even for the casual, much less for the deliberate infidelity of women, it must be confessed that the frailties to which I allude, can hardly come under this denomination; as a woman can with no propriety be said to be guilty of Infidelity, where no faith is formally or virtually plighted. Should any unhappy Lady therefore, in such a situation, suffer the punishment usually inflicted on those who are convicted of following the dictates of their own inclinations, let the humane of both sexes drop the tear of pity over her misfortunes.

† One man among a thousand have I found, but a woman among all these have I not found. Eccles. vii. 28.

contributed more to its degradation, than all the barbarians that ever existed; because the effects of barbarous manners are local and temporary, and can only possess a partial influence during the infancy of society; but the effects of the Mahometan institutions in this case, must necessarily become as extensive and permanent as the Mahometan faith, on which they depend.——By these institutions, women are treated as creatures of an inferior species, and are subjected to the caprice and tyranny of their imperious lords; as if they were created solely for the purpose of ministering to their pleasures. Mahomet indeed, not contented with subjecting women to the absolute dominion of his own sex in this world, has contrived to extend this dominion to the other. Well acquainted with the sensual turn of his countrymen, he has there provided enjoyments suited to their taste; and has transfused his system of sensuality into the pleasures of Paradise; where he has surrounded the faithful with a train of Houri, or beautiful black-eyed virgins, whose office it is to regale true Mussulmen, with all those gratifications, which the most refined sensuality and luxury can impart.

As I verily believe, Ladies, without any intention to compliment you, that many of you are possessed of charms, that might vie with those of the black-eyed damsels of Paradise, I cannot help reprobating a system, which would prostitute all your accomplishments, both mental and corporeal, to the wretched purpose of gratifying a sensual and transitory passion.

That you, my fair countrywomen, placed in happier circumstances, may, by all the charms and accomplishments of which you are possessed, secure a lasting empire over the hearts of our sex, for the mutual benefit of both, is the ardent wish of him who has the honour to be

Your most faithful Friend.

LET-

LETTER XIII.

THOUGH the barbarous manners of savage life, and the false refinements in pleasure, which prevail in Eastern countries, under absolute governments, are, as we have seen, highly unfavourable to the dignity of women, and to the respect due to them, there is a certain period in the earlier stages of society, which is, in the most important respects, very favourable to both.

There are some climates, which in a very early period of social life, seem to have been peculiarly propitious, both to the exertions of genius and to the simplicity and innocence of ancient manners.—Thus Homer, born in the genial climate of ancient Greece, so fertile in poets and in heroes, flourished many ages before Greece arrived at the meridian of her glory in arts and sciences, or in policy or war; and he exhibits to our view, in his admirable works, a state of society much earlier than that in which he himself lived, and distinguished by a purity and simplicity

plicity of manners, which we in vain look for in more modern and more cultivated periods. In the description which he has given us, in his Odyssey in particular, of the reception which Ulysses met with at the court of Alcinous, and of the employments of the queen and daughter of that monarch, we have a beautiful and affecting display of the simple, innocent, and hospitable manners of ancient times; manners peculiarly favourable to the accomplishment of the female character, in its native and most attractive graces.—From such scenes and manners as these, the poets have borrowed their ideas of a golden age—an age indeed which has never yet existed, except in their imaginations, but to which the simplicity and innocence of ancient manners bears the nearest resemblance. I shall probably expose myself to the ridicule and censure of many of my fair countrywomen, when I affirm, that the age of Ossian too, though much less polished than that of the Phæocian monarch, was highly favourable to the advantageous display of the female character. Let it be observed however, that the age of Ossian was the age of true heroism, and of pure and disinterested love; and that the manners of both sexes, though simple, and for the most part innocent, were not savage, and its favourable influence on the female character will be abundantly apparent. I must beg leave, Ladies, farther to declare, sorry as I should be to suffer in the good opinion of any individual of a sex that I so much respect, that in my estimation, the character of Malvina,

vina, the mistress of Oscar, and who may be said to be the muse of Ossian, is in all the essential excellencies of an amiable woman, greatly preferable to that of many fine Ladies, who figure in the drawing room on a birth-day, or draw the attention of Lords, Knights, and Esquires, as they walk along the Mall, by the richness of their dress, the symmetry of their features, or the elegance of their persons. "What, cries the spirited Flavilla, astonished at the boldness of the assertion, "is your taste, Sir, so vulgar, and so wretched, as to prefer a simple highland girl, who was never ten miles distant from her native mountains; who was never present at an assembly, except an assembly of highland chiefs and maidens, at the feast of shells in the Hall of Fingal, nor ever danced except with a few of her ragged countrymen, to the melancholy music of Ossian's harp; who never played cards in her life, nor ever heard of a route, drum or masquerade? Is your taste, I repeat it again, so vulgar, as to prefer such an unpolished country girl to a modern fine Lady, who is acquainted with the ton, and excites the admiration of the gazing crowd?" Much as I admire your spirit, Flavilla, give me leave, after all your raillery and abuse of my countrymen and countrywomen, once more to declare, and I am convinced that many of your sex will join with me in the declaration, that a character like that of Malvina, will, upon account of the delicacy, sweetness and sensibility by which it is distinguished, be contemplated with love and admiration,

ration, when your belles and coquettes, the pageants and flutterers of a day, shall, like the insect tribes that sport in the blaze of noon, be dissipated by the blast of winter, and drop into the land of darkness and oblivion.

Give me the modest lovely maiden of unaffected simplicity of manners, and genuine sensibility of heart, whose eye, beaming with the mildest radiance, moistens at the tale of misery, and whose heart throbs with the pangs of sympathetic sorrow, and "she shall eat of my bread and drink of my cup, and be unto me as a daughter."

LET-

LETTER XIV.

THERE is another æra in society, my honoured friends, which though according to our modern ideas of improvement, far from being a very cultivated one, is however, with respect to the admiration and attention of our sex, of which many of you are so desirous, more favourable to you than any period whatsoever. This æra, is what is commonly called the age of chivalry and romance; a curious and remarkable period in the history of man, and which succeeded a period no less remarkable, that of the crusades, carried on by the Christian princes and potentates, against the infidels. The feats of chivalry, which seem to have been an imitation of the crusades, were dictated by a similar phrenzy, operating only in a different direction, and pointing to a different object; but the former were in their consequences, much more harmless than the latter.

This phrenzy, indeed, was not peculiar to our sex. Some Ladies of those days, caught by infection the heroic

heroic spirit of the times, and armed with helmet, spear and shield, and mounted on fiery steeds, rushed forth to the tented field, mingling among embattled hosts in the bloody fray; or, animated by the thirst of glory, boldly challenged their rival antagonists of the other sex to single combat. The episodes of Marphisa and Brandimart in the Orlando Furioso of Ariosto, of Clorinda in the Jerusalem Delivered, of Tasso, and of Ruggier and Brandamant, in the Fairy Queen of Spencer, though embellished by those admirable poets, are in some measure copied from the life.—This spirit, however, very fortunately for the safety of our sex, has long since subsided; and as it is no amiable ingredient in the female character, its revival is not to be desired. I am apt indeed, Ladies, to suspect, that powerful as is the influence of your charms, you might find it difficult to revive the true spirit of knight-errantry among the gentlemen of the present age; and if you could revive it, I am persuaded, you have too much humanity to attempt it. For, though the giants and dragons, the enchanters and magicians of former times have long since disappeared, there might still arise very considerable inconveniences and dangers, both to your lovers and to the lieges in general, from the revival of the feats of chivalry; when the adventurous hero should sally forth, conquering and to conquer all who should be daring enough to dispute the peerless charms of his Dulcinea. If while he was thus transported with ardour for the honour of his mistress, and animated by the glory of his enterprize,

terprize, some unfortunate barber should perchance come in his way, he might, like his predecessor of illustrious memory, the renowned knight of La Mancha, mistake him for a champion coming to oppose him, and his bason for the helmet of another Mambrino, and the encounter might be productive of bloody deeds. Most of our modern knights-errant however, very fortunately, are more peaceably disposed; and are inclined to enlist themselves in the service of Bacchus rather than of Mars, and to determine the superiority of their mistresses by drinking, rather than by fighting, till they are literally able to *say no more*; in which case, perhaps the hardy conqueror, inspired by the juice of the grape, has courage enough to attack watchmen and lanthorns instead of knights, as he reels home to his lodgings. But, though I have no great passion for the feats of chivalry, which in the present age would probably speedily procure an apartment in bedlam, for the person who attempted them—an apartment, that would as effectually terminate the exploits of knight errantry as any enchanted castle, in which any unfortunate knight or lady was ever confined; I should have no objection to a small portion of the ancient spirit of chivalry, without its extravagance, being transfused through our modern system of gallantry. Though I do not wish to see the Macaronies, the Jemmy's and the Jessamy's of the present times, accoutred, like the redoubtable champions of a more heroic age, of whom, I am afraid they would be but a poor representation,

I heartily wish to see more of the ancient generosity, respect and tenderness, in the mutual behaviour of lovers and mistresses, of husbands and wives, to each other. By such an interchange of respectful sentiments, and of kind and affectionate offices, the politeness, virtue and happiness of both sexes would be promoted. These effects however, are obstructed by the selfishness, dissipation, and corruption of modern manners—manners, to which the conduct of many of your sex give too powerful a sanction, and which the generous and steady exertions of that part of it who are equally distinguished for their sense, rank and virtue, can alone correct. The happy consequences which would redound from the influence and example of these amiable censors and correctors of manners may be easily imagined, though it falls not at present within the design of these Letters to illustrate and to unfold them.

LET-

LETTER XV.

AS I am treating, Ladies, of the different degrees of respect and attention shewn by our sex to yours, in different periods of society, it may be worth while to enquire, in what estimation women were held by the two most celebrated nations of antiquity, the Greeks and Romans; what influence they possessed over those nations, and in what manner they exerted that influence. It is to be regretted indeed, that we know less of the private life of the former people, and of the intercourse which subsisted betwixt the sexes among them, than we know of that of the latter. Their historians, intent on marking and describing the revolutions which happened in Greece, and the characters of the actors concerned in them, have not bestowed so much attention on objects less splendid indeed, but highly worthy of our curiosity, and contributing to throw great light upon the characters both of individuals and of nations. In Athens, the seat of learning as well as liberty, that spirit of

stern heroism, which actuated their Spartan neighbours, was mitigated, we know, by the polished manners of its refined and ingenious inhabitants. The influence of the fair sex, it cannot be doubted, greatly contributed to the introduction and improvement of those manners. It is certain, that both Socrates and Pericles, acknowledged themselves indebted to Aspasia for their eloquence; but the Athenian Ladies, in general, do not seem to have been held in that high estimation, which might have been expected from so polite a people.

In Athens, the most celebrated city of ancient Greece, there was none of that easy and liberal intercourse betwixt the sexes, except with Ladies of doubtful virtue, which contributes so much to the entertainment and improvement of both. Women were, by the laws, (dictated doubtless by the jealousy of their husbands,) forbidden to appear abroad during the day, or even at night, unless in a carriage with a flambeau before it. This law was ineffectual however, as it could not be rendered general, but left women of the lower rank at liberty to do as they thought proper. To those of higher rank it became only a rule of decorum, which was often transgressed, upon important, and even trivial occasions; and instances of its violation occurred every day. Women had likewise lawful reasons for leaving their retirements, upon particular occasions. At certain feasts forbidden to the men, they assembled together; and at public festivals, they assisted in the spectacles, and

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in the service of the temple. But in general they were not allowed to appear in public, without being attended by eunuchs and female slaves. The Athenians indeed were formerly so jealous, as not to allow their women to appear at the windows of their apartments, an instance of rigour which served only to increase the evil it was meant to prevent; nor were they allowed to receive men in the absence of their husbands. A woman convicted of adultery was divorced in the field. The laws excluded her from all religious ceremonies; and if she appeared in studied dress, every one was entitled to pull off her garments and tear her apparel. A man might apply for a divorce from his wife, or a wife from her husband, in the case of adultery, before a tribunal in which one of the magistrates presided; but, as a proof of the depravity of the Athenian manners, and of the inefficacy of the laws to correct the enormity above mentioned, the virtuous Hipparete, wife of Alcibiades, having sued before this tribunal for a divorce from her dissolute husband, the favourite of his fellow citizens, he carried her off in triumph, in direct violation and defiance of the laws of his country, amidst the applause of the people.

Among the Athenians, the wives, destined to manage their household affairs, and to transmit the family name by giving children to the state, appear to have had little influence over their husbands; but the courtezans, instructed in the arts of rendering themselves agreeable, richly dressed, and often highly accomplished, engaged the affections of their lovers,

and obtained a shameful influence and ascendant over them, by their charms and accomplishments *. We know more of the influence of women over the Romans than over the Greeks, and of the respect with which they were treated by that public-spirited, and haughty people.

A remarkable example of this influence occurs in the interposition of the Sabine women, in the war betwixt the Sabines their countrymen, and the Romans, now their husbands. By the successful mediation of these women, peace was restored to both nations, and they became from that time one people.

The generous and just resentment manifested by the Romans, at the dishonour done to Brutus, in the rape of Lucretia, by the tyrant Tarquin, and their consequent revolt, which terminated in the subversion of the regal government, was a striking instance of the respect which that high-spirited people paid to female virtue.

The abolition of the odious office of the decemvirs, occasioned by the death of Virginia, who was slain by her own father, in order to preserve her from the intended attempt against her chastity, by the decemvir Appius Claudius, was another eminent example of their nice sense of female honour, and of their determined resolution to avenge even an intended violation of it. One of the most signal examples of female eloquence, exerted in a good cause, that we have upon record, is the successful influence of Volumnia,

* See the Travels of Anacharsis, vol. ii. ch. xx.

lumnia, Veturia, and the Roman Ladies, over the haughty and stubborn soul of Coriolanus, who had carried destruction to the very gates of Rome. This brave man, filled with indignation and disdain at the wrongs done him, by an ungrateful and insolent rabble, had remained inflexible to all the arguments of the senators and priests deputed to deprecate his vengeance, but at last yielded to the tender and importunate solicitations of a wife and mother. "Rome," said the hero to this last, "is saved; but your son is undone." The senate, deeply sensible of the important service which the Ladies by their successful embassy had done to the state, desired them to ask any reward in their power to bestow. Their request was, to be permitted to build a temple to WOMEN'S FORTUNE. The venerable fathers agreed that the temple should be built; but resolved that the expence should be defrayed out of the public treasury.

But perhaps the triumph of female influence over the rigid spirit of the ancient Romans, was never more successfully displayed than in a cause deeply interesting to women—that of dress, ornaments and equipage; which came to be tried before the tribunal of the people, during the consulship of Cato; a name inauspicious to every species of luxury. It must be allowed, however, that the Ladies, who had upon so many occasions distinguished themselves by their patriotism, had a good title to expect, that a regard should be shewn to their solicitations, in a cause which was wholly their own.

While Hannibal was desolating Italy, the treasury being exhausted by the efforts made to oppose so formidable an enemy, a tribune of the people, of the name of Oppius, had procured a law to be enacted, that no woman should use above half an ounce of gold for ornament, wear a purple garment, or be driven in a chariot at Rome, or within a mile of the city, unless she were to assist at any public sacrifice. As the Ladies chearfully submitted to this act, during the dangerous and distressful times of the republic, they thought that, in the situation in which it then was, they had reason to hope for the abrogation of a law, which, with regard to external appearance, put the poor and rich, in a great measure, upon a level. And indeed, their endeavours, in the present state of things, to procure a repeal of this law, could scarce have been condemned, had the means they employed for this purpose, been a little more delicate. To see crowds of Roman matrons and virgins beseting the avenues to the forum, and publicly soliciting every one who had interest with the people to espouse their cause, does not convey to us the most favourable opinion of their delicacy. Cato, indeed, had some reason for reproving a mode of address, scarce consistent with the modesty we expect to find in the sex, when he declares, that he blushed for his countrywomen, in seeing them publicly addressing other men besides their own husbands, with whom only their influence should have been employed at home, if employed at all. Suppose, my fair countrywomen,

a British House of Commons thus beset, and the members of it thus addressed, by the Ladies of the present age, and you will best judge of the propriety and decency of such a conduct. I will submit it to your own candour, whether such solicitations would not justly expose them to the censure of practising an *undue influence*. The Roman Ladies, however, found a powerful support in the abilities and gallantry of the tribune Valerius, by whose influence, aided by that of some of his colleagues, whom, by the unremitting importunity of their solicitations, they, in a manner forced to join him, they procured a repeal of the Oppian law, in spite of the unrelenting severity of Cato.

The last instance of female influence over the Roman people, is of so singular a nature, and exhibits such an example of the effect of female eloquence, that my fair readers will readily excuse my presenting it to their view.

As the Triumvirs, who had usurped the sovereign power in Rome, found, after all their exertions and confiscations, a great deficiency in the sum necessary for carrying on the war; they resolved, with equal cruelty and injustice, to make up that deficiency by a tax, upon the richest Ladies of Rome, to the number of 1400, relatives of the persons they had proscribed. The Ladies, having remonstrated in vain against this arbitrary and tyrannical act, resolved to plead their own cause, and demanded to be heard before the tribunal of their judges. Having chosen

Hortensia, the daughter of the celebrated orator Hortensius, to be their speaker, they proceeded in a body to the Forum, for the purpose of addressing the Triumvirs. The tyrants, alarmed at their approach, ordered their guards to disperse them, but a murmur arising among the people. at the insult offered to the Ladies, they were obliged to hear the speech of Hortensia, in favour of herself and her clients, to the following effect. " The unhappy women, you see here imploring your justice and bounty, would never have presumed to appear in this place, had they not first made use of all other means which their natural modesty could suggest to them. Though our appearing here, may seem contrary to the rules of decency prescribed to our sex, which we have hitherto observed with all strictness, yet the loss of our fathers, children, brothers, and husbands, may sufficiently excuse us, especially when their unhappy deaths are made a pretence for our further misfortunes. You pretend, that they had offended and provoked you; but what injury have the women done, that they should be impoverished? If they are as blameable as the men, why do you not proscribe them too?—Have we declared you enemies to your country?—Have we corrupted your soldiers, raised troops against you, or opposed you in the pursuit of those honours and offices which you claim?—We pretend not to govern the republic; nor is it our ambition, that has drawn the present misfortunes on our heads. Empire, dignities, honours, are not for us. Why should

should we contribute to a war, wherein we have no manner of interest? It is true, indeed, that in the Carthaginian war, our mothers assisted the republic, which was at that time reduced to the utmost distress: but neither their houses, their lands, nor their moveables, were sold for the public service; some rings, and a few jewels, furnished the supply; it was not constraint and violence, that forced it from them: what they contributed was entirely owing to their good will, and generous dispositions. What danger at present threatens the city? If the Gauls or Parthians were encamped on the banks of the Tiber, or the Anio, you should find us no less zealous in the defence of our common country, than our mothers were before us. But we ought not, and will not, be any way concerned in civil wars. Neither Marcus, nor Cæsar, nor Pompey, ever thought of obliging us to take part in the domestic troubles which their ambition raised; nay, not Sylla himself, who first set up tyranny in Rome: and yet you assume the glorious title of reformers of the state—a title, which will turn to your eternal ignominy, if, without the least regard to the laws of equity, you persist in your wicked resolution of plundering those of their estates and fortunes, who have given you no just cause of offence."

The Triumvirs, provoked at the boldness of her speech, and fearing it might occasion some sudden tumult, ordered the lictors to drive away such troublesome suppliants: but the people crying out against such

such violence, they adjourned the affair to the next day, when, to appease the multitude, who had openly espoused the cause of the women, they reduced the number to be taxed from 1400 to 400; levying the balance of the sum required upon 100,000 men and upwards, strangers as well as citizens.

Such was the estimation, in which women were held by the ancient Romans, and such was the effect of female eloquence on that patriotic people.

I heartily wish, my dear Ladies, that your influence over the gentlemen of the present age, which, if it be not equal to that of the Roman dames, over their countrymen, may certainly, in general, be so, if it be not your own fault, may daily increase, provided that influence be exercised with reason and delicacy, with moderation and good humour.

LET-

LETTER XVI.

I Observed, my much respected friends, in a former Letter *, that the estimation in which women are held, and the respect paid to them, will, *in general*, be found to depend upon the state of civilization, the nature of the government, the liberality of sentiment generally prevalent, and the freedom of communication betwixt the sexes. I chose to deliver my opinion with caution, by affirming, that this will be the case *in general*. I am perfectly conscious, that there will be found some exceptions. It may for instance, sometimes happen, even in a very civilized state of society, that from peculiar causes, the manners of the women, as well as of the men, may become singularly depraved, their conversation trifling, and their characters altogether despicable. In such a case, it would be impossible for men of sense to contemplate them, either with respect or attachment. But then, indeed, it is to be observed on the other hand, that when

* Letter II.

when this is the case, the men with whom they associate, will at least be as depraved, and despicable, as the women, and neither of them can justly be objects of respect and esteem to the other.

In civilized society, and under mild and free governments, there will always be a very considerable communication betwixt the sexes; and this communication will necessarily produce a similarity of manners. In an age of excessive refinement, where the communication above-mentioned is unrestrained, the men will often be formed too much upon the model of the women. Hence, the fops and macaronies of the age. In a period of less refinement, where the intercourse is less free, the women will contemplate the characters of the men at a distance with respect; and will frequently approximate to the ruling manners. Hence it was, that in the age of chivalry, the women were not only admirers of military prowess, but were sometimes ambitious of signalizing themselves in it. Such is the mutual influence of the manners of the two sexes on each other. But, I am inclined to think, that the process of seduction, to the higher degrees of moral depravity at least, must be laid to the charge of the men; and, that though we are told, in the primæval transgression, the woman tempted the man, in the present state of things the man usually tempts the woman, and leads her to imitate his vices; an alteration, of which I leave it to philosophers to investigate the causes. But whatever contagion of vice or frivolousness, the women

may

may catch from the men, or the men from the women, in consequence of a free interchange of sentiments and manners, it will still hold true in general, as above observed, that women will be most respected, and enjoy the greatest influence, in a period of society highly civilized, and under a mild and free government, in which liberality of sentiment prevails, and in a country, where a free and easy correspondence subsists between the sexes.

I know of no countries in the world, where women have fairer opportunities of obtaining the esteem of our sex, and at the same time, of securing a real and permanent influence over them, than in France and Great Britain, particularly the latter. In the more northern kingdoms of Europe, in Russia and Sweden for instance, though the former, from the abilities of its Sovereigns, hath for some time past advanced considerably in civilization, the women have not yet in general acquired those amiable and attractive graces, which are most powerful in conciliating the affection of the more accomplished of the other sex.

The gravity of the men in Spain, and their jealousy in Portugal, not only discourage the vivacity of the women, but by rendering intercourse betwixt the sexes more dangerous and difficult, obstruct that improvement of the Ladies, which might be gained by a more liberal conversation with the men, and consequently preclude the most favourable opportunities of either conciliating the esteem of the other.

The

The manners of the Italian Ladies are thought, by most of our countrymen, rather too free; a circumstance by no means calculated to conciliate either love or respect. But, in France, the women in general are allowed to possess the power of rendering themselves peculiarly agreeable, by the vivacity of their wit, and by the easiness and complaisance which appear in every part of their conversation and behaviour.

It is worthy of remark, that in France, the Ladies appear to have acquired an influence in the government, under the different Sovereigns, from the time of Henry II. till the late revolution, which has been unequalled in any other monarchy. From the time of Catharine de Medicis, in particular, the queen, or the mistresses of the monarch, with very few exceptions, have directed or influenced the measures of administration, and set all those springs in motion, which have produced the most important changes in the other states and kingdoms of Europe, and in those of the new world, connected with the European kingdoms. Of this extensive degree of female influence, we have no examples in the history of our own country. Whether it be, that the Ladies of Great Britain, who move in the higher circles of life, have less disposition for court intrigues, or the jealousy of our government admits not of their meddling much in state affairs, it is certain that, possessing as they do, more patriotism than the French Ladies did under the old government, they have never discovered that extra-

vagant

vagant desire of sway in the public administration, which was a distinguishing trait in the character of their neighbours. In order to account for the general influence of the French Ladies, both over their countrymen and strangers, we may observe, that from the liberality of sentiment, and frankness of manners, by which they were distinguished, aided by their natural vivacity, they had acquired that politeness of behaviour, which rendered them peculiarly agreeable, and made them to be regarded as the model of other nations. This politeness, however, which to most persons is so fascinating, hath by some very sensible people, been considered as approaching to frivolousness *.

Favourable, however, upon the whole, as the manners of the French women must be acknowledged to be, or rather to have been, for securing their influence over their countrymen, I cannot think them more favourable for these purposes, than are those of

* These Letters, which had been long laid aside by the Author, were written before the French Revolution in 1789—an awful event, which like a tremendous volcano, hath, in its progress and effects, swallowed up the general stream of principles and manners in its devouring gulf. One thing is certain, that the revolutionary spirit, carried on under the direction of ambitious and wicked men, to its wildest excess, hath given birth to a series of enormities and crimes, which have fixed a stain upon the French name and nation, that no length of time can ever obliterate. What the present system of their government really is, it would be difficult to determine, unless we call it a military despotism. We have seen one monarchy destroyed, and another more absolute one erected on its ruins. With regard to the manners of the people, it cannot be denied, that instead of being a model to others, they have acquired that savage cast, which may justly expunge them from the list of civilized nations.

of the British Ladies, many of whom are certainly not inferior in all the solid, and even ornamental excellencies of the female character, to any women upon earth. The mildness and freedom of our government too, and the easy intercourse which prevails betwixt the sexes, afford the Ladies the fairest scope for the advantageous display of their accomplishments. Be careful only, my fair countrywomen, to cultivate such qualities and accomplishments as are essential and really ornamental, and you cannot fail, I do not say to govern, which I do not think it would be for your credit to attempt, but, to influence your lovers and your husbands, in as great a degree as any reasonable woman can desire.

LET-

LETTER XVII.

AS I have shewn you, my fair readers, that your sex will be most respected, and that they really enjoy peculiar advantages for the display of their talents and accomplishments, and for establishing their influence over the hearts of the other sex, in a highly civilized period of society, and under a mild and free government, where liberality of sentiment prevails, and an easy intercourse subsists betwixt the sexes, I cannot help congratulating the British Ladies, whom I have at present the honour to address, upon being placed in a situation, as favourable for these purposes as can well be imagined. Will you permit me, my amiable friends, now to enquire, What is your natural and proper station in society; what are the characters you are called upon to sustain; and what are the duties you are appointed to discharge, in the various departments of private and social life? These interesting subjects will come under our consideration, in the course of the following Letters.

Though the mental faculties are the same in women as in men; the sphere of action of the former is very different from that of the latter. In consequence of that superior degree of corporeal strength, with which man is endued, he is not only qualified to be the protector and guardian of the softer sex, but by his singular activity of mind and body, is eminently qualified for all the dangerous and toilsome, for all the busy and bustling scenes of life, which are his peculiar province. Thus man, in the savage state, despising the rigours of winter, is not afraid, while armed with his gun and bow, to encounter the wolf and the bear hunting for their prey. In the civilized state of society, man is still the same active being; only his activity and enterprize are employed in a different manner, and on different objects. Ambition, or a desire of distinction and of fame, that universal passion inseparable from our nature, appears in the more advanced periods of society, under a thousand various forms, and exerts itself in a thousand various directions, according to the different taste, education, and habits of mankind. Sometimes it incites the intrepid soldier, undismayed by the apprehension of danger or death, to rush amidst contending hosts, where the battle rages in its utmost fury, "courting the bubble reputation" (as Shakespear expresses it,) "even at the cannon's mouth:" sometimes it leads the politician to endeavour to distinguish himself in the sage deliberations of the cabinet, by devising profound plans of political wisdom; sometimes it inspires the

the breast of the orator and the patriot, with the ardent desire of drawing the attention and admiration of listening senates, by the irresistible power of their eloquence. At other times, it animates the mental exertions of the author, in the various productions of genius and learning, by encouraging him with the hopes of obtaining the approbation and applause both of the present and of future ages.

From all these splendid and envied spheres, (the last only excepted,) you my fair readers are debarred, by the destiny of providence, by the propriety and decorum of character which it concerns you to maintain, and by those bounds, which the author of our common nature has prescribed to your powers and to your exertions, beyond which, you ought not to attempt to pass. To exclude you from the paths of literature and science, might appear illiberal and invidious; and I honour women too much, and respect many individuals among them too highly, to wish to exclude them. But the extensive and hidden fields, and intricate paths of learning, my amiable friends, are not in general your natural province. It must be acknowledged, that a general passion for literary fame, transfused through your sex, would be attended with the most obvious disadvantages, by inducing women to desert their natural and proper sphere, by interfering with their most important duties, and by disturbing the order and harmony of domestic society.

You will ask me then, Ladies, what is your natural, general, and proper station in society? I answer,

that the humble, but not inglorious walks of private life, constitute your true sphere, and your natural and proper station in social life. These walks, you are not only called upon, but qualified, to cheer, to embellish, and to adorn. Though you are debarred from displaying your ingenuity in the political debates of the cabinet, in which, I doubt not that some of you are capable of giving as sound advice, as many of the members of His Majesty's most honourable Privy Council, or your eloquence in the senate, by stemming the tide of venality and corruption, yours is the less envied, but not less substantial praise, of fostering, by your benign and gentle influence, both in our minds and in your own, all the attractive graces and amiable virtues, which purify the heart, sweeten the temper, and bless and exalt human life.

Your general station then, Ladies, in society, I repeat it again, is a private and domestic one; and be assured of it, that in the proper discharge of the duties of that station, as will appear in the following Letters, consists a woman's highest honour and her greatest glory *.

LET-

* A late celebrated Amazonian heroine, Mrs. Woolstoncraft Godwin, highly irritated at the domineering spirit of the other sex, and resolved to maintain the equal prerogatives of her own, hath in the true spirit of ancient chivalry, entered the lists, and appeared in the field of controversy, to which she has, in her book on the rights of women, boldly summoned the most redoubtable male champions to meet her in single combat, in order to assert or relinquish the superiority they claim. What the opinion of the Ladies

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in general may be of the propriety and decorum of the attempt of this heroine, or of the energy and efficacy of the weapons she has used in the war she has commenced, against a sex, whose encroaching spirit she wishes to repress, I cannot pretend to determine; but I am confident, that those of her own sex, who are most distinguished by a delicacy of sentiment, by true feminine sensibility, and by a just sense of the genuine rights of women, will not think themselves much obliged to the contumacious spirit of a combatant, who hath stretched those rights beyond their natural and proper bounds. The contempt and indignation discovered by some delicate and virtuous individuals of her own sex, against the principles and practice of a woman, who instead of vindicating, has betrayed the true rights of womankind, have raised a monument to their honour, which I hope the generality of the female sex will ever revere, and have exhibited an example which I trust they will always be careful to imitate.

It is impossible to avoid observing, upon this subject, that this unfortunate woman became at last the just victim of her own licentious principles; and that instigated by slighted love, jealousy, resentment, shame, and the disgrace she entailed on herself, by her own culpable conduct, she was driven to an act of desperation, that had well nigh terminated in her death. Of this reproach on her memory, her Biographer, Admirer, and Husband, might have spared the communication; but probably his superlative admiration of her character prevented him from perceiving that reproach. The Author of these Letters would certainly have spared these remarks, if the above mentioned Biographer, Mr Godwin, had not exhibited his Heroine as a paragon of excellence in the female character; an insult to the sex, which it becomes every virtuous woman to treat with the indignity it deserves.

Had Mr Godwin thought of publishing his Memoirs of this Lady in France, the book, for aught I know, might have been a very popular work in that country; but I apprehend his performance is not very likely to obtain the suffrage of the British Fair in its favour.

LETTER XVIII.

HAVING pointed out, Ladies, the station you are destined to occupy in society, give me leave to enquire, what are the general characters you are required to sustain in it. I aver then, that the general characters you are called upon, and which many of you are qualified to sustain, are those of the friends and companions of man.

After the Sovereign Creator had formed our first progenitor out of the dust of the earth, as an emblem of the meanness of his original, and of the humility which should distinguish his conduct, we are told that he said, "*It is not good for man to be alone, I will provide him an help mate*," and the help which he provided was woman, whom he formed not out of the dust of the earth, as he had done the man; but (in order to denote the intimate union of this first pair, and as it should seem their equality.) from a rib severed from his side while he was asleep. Had the venerable father of the human race been awake, when

when this operation was going to be performed; had he foreseen all the evils which were to happen to himself and his posterity, from the first act of his wife's disobedience; and had he at the same time had an option given him, to part with this rib or not as he chose, he would have kept it, (some wag might be apt to say to himself,) and take his chance of spending his solitary life in Paradise without a mate, rather than have involved himself and his descendants in the guilt and wretchedness resulting from the first transgression. As the human race however, but for this rib, must have commenced and terminated in the first man, the sons of Adam have nothing left for them, but to take the good and ill arising from the creation of woman, as it happens to come; and though some ill-fated individuals of our sex may have reason to wish that the union between the sexes were not quite so intimate or so lasting, the far greater part of them, it is to be hoped, have reason to rejoice in having formed mates *meet for them.*

Hail, connubial love, mysterious union! Indissoluble bond of tenderest amity, of sweetest concord, and of the most ardent and lasting friendship! Hail, primæval, paradisaical, sacred institution of marriage, deriving thine origin and authority from the sovereign appointment of the Creator himself, who joined the first pair by thy solemn rites and thy holy ties, emblems of that intimate union, unchangeable affection, and conjugal fidelity, which should subsist between per-

persons of different sexes, thus connected, in every succeeding age of the world! Hail, thou copious source of the purest, most exquisite, and most permanent pleasures of human life! By thy benign and genial influeuce, thou brightenest the sun-shine of prosperity, and by thy sympathetic power and cordial balm, healest most effectually, next to the consolations of religion, the stings of grief and affection, in the human heart! But what, alas! do I say? All the happy effects of this institution, important and respectable as it is in its nature, and divine as it is in its original, are too often frustrated by the madness and folly, by the selfishness and incontinence of man! Though this wise and beneficent institution was intended to procure for him all the comforts of the most agreeable domestic society; and though a connection founded upon it, formed on virtuous motives, and cemented by mutual esteem and affection, is productive of all the happiness of which an imperfect state can admit; how often do we see it perverted from its original end, and debased into a scandalous traffic betwixt the contracting parties or their parents, in order to promote the purposes of interest or ambition, in direct violation of the dictates of nature, and in opposition to the tenderest sentiments of friendship and of love *?

But

* I am sorry to observe, that while the happiness which the matrimonial state is calculated to produce, is often sacrificed to views of sordid interest, the state itself is by too many avoided and disregarded. When I think of the

But, that I may not digress too far from the subject of this Letter, I observed, Ladies, that the characters you are called upon, and which many of you are qualified to sustain, is that of the friends and companions of man. This is the general relation you bear to the other sex, and the general character you are required to maintain. When I speak of this as the general character incumbent upon you to maintain, let it be understood, that I consider it as equally incumbent on our sex to maintain the same character toward yours. The relation above-mentioned, pertains alike to both sexes, and the duties resulting from

the conduct of such persons, I cannot help feeling an honest indignation arise in my mind at the perversion of their taste, in foregoing the sweets of the matrimonial union, deluded by the idea of enjoying an imaginary liberty, while they are the real slaves of sensuality and licentiousness. Had I the honour to enjoy the confidence, and to be of the council of our Prime Minister, I would whisper in his ear, that a tax upon old Bachelors of a certain income, turned of forty, amounting to at least a fourth part of their yearly revenue, to be applied for portioning young maidens poorly provided, would be a far more equitable tax than many of those at present imposed upon the poorer, but more useful members of society. I would not indeed have them ejected and destroyed, as happens to the drones of another well regulated community, under the dominion of a female Sovereign; but I would have them subjected to such penalties as should serve in some measure for their correction, as a warning to others, if they should not be sufficient for their reformation. An Old Maid, if she maintain that character with becoming dignity, complacency, and good humour, is an object of esteem and respect; but an old Bachelor is, for the most part, for I admit that there are some exceptions, an object of equal pity and contempt. Though the peculiar delicacy of the situation of many of my fair readers, forbids their complaint on such a subject, it belongs to the candid of our sex to reprobate a state of celibacy, as injurious to the interests of society, and to many respectable individuals of the softer sex, who by the depraved taste of ours, are doomed, like fragrant flowers, to exhale their odours,

" And waste their sweetness on the desert air".

from it are mutual and reciprocal. It will readily occur to you, Ladies, that the character of the friends and companions of man, which you are thus called upon to maintain, implies a perfect equality both of rights and obligations in both sexes, as necessary to constitute true friendship. The question is, how to reconcile this equality with that prerogative, for the exercise of which in the matrimonial state, our sex so strenuously contend? Upon this delicate subject, I shall not enter at present, but shall defer the consideration of it, till I come to treat of the duties incumbent upon you in connubial life. The subject of the present Letter is restricted to the consideration of your general character, as the friends and companions of man, which it concerns you to maintain. With all the partiality however, which you may feel for your own sex, you will not pretend, that even the greater part of women are qualified to maintain this character, with honour to themselves, and with advantage to the other sex.

I shall, therefore, first, consider those weaknesses and vices, which frequently appear in the female character, and which, wherever they appear, disqualify the persons in whom they are discernible, for being the estimable friends and companions of the worthiest and most accomplished of our sex, of whom only, let it be understood, I am speaking; and shall next consider those talents and dispositions, which eminently qualify the women who are possessed of them for this relation.

I begin with taking a view of the weaknesses and vices of women, which disqualify them for the character and relation above-mentioned.

The first of these, arising from a deficiency of understanding, are in some cases unavoidable; the latter, proceeding from a depravity of disposition, may in all cases be corrected and subdued by discipline and culture.

LETTER XIX.

IF, Ladies, the design and plan of the present work admitted of a delineation of the character of my own sex, I shall honestly acknowledge, that the picture would be far more deeply shaded with the black colours of vice and profligacy than yours; but, as these Letters are confined to the consideration of the weaknesses and vices, and of the talents and virtues of women only; I shall study to observe as much impartiality as possible, in the exhibition of these; confident as I am, that the more judicious part of your sex will approve of such impartiality. To flatter either your vices or your weaknessess, the author would consider as a shameful sacrifice of the interests of truth, as a degradation of his own character, and as an insult to your understanding.

The first of those weaknesses that I shall mention, as disqualifying you for being the estimable friends and companions of the most estimable and accomplished

plished part of our sex, is VANITY, when accompanied, as is sometimes the case, by a disposition to talkativeness.

If there is any one quality *generally* characteristic of the nature of women, it is that of VANITY. Nor think, my amiable friends, that I mean to brand your sex with any peculiar degree of ignominy or weakness, when I consider this quality as its general character. Would to God, that we had not much greater faults and blemishes to account for than this, I had almost said pardonable weakness, if not carried to excess. But can the generality of our sex pretend to be exempted even from this weakness? we certainly cannot justly claim this exemption: Vanity is common to both sexes, and to all ages.

Ye proud Lords of the creation, who wonder and laugh at the vanity of women, say, are ye less vain than they, when you exult in the possession of a garter or a ribbon, which is obtained by court-favour, and not conferred as the ensign of merit? Display then, my fair ones, your fancy and taste in the choice of your head dress or birthday suit, and contemplate both your person and dress with a moderate degree of approbation. Why not? you are not a whit more vain than your male companions and friends, who figure at court with an embroidered coat, with a star on their breast, and a garter on their arm. Let the beaus and the belles of the age therefore, be mutually indulgent to each others foibles; nor let the one accuse the other of a weakness common to both. Vanity in the

masculine character, is indeed, a very pitiable weakness. It is not, I acknowledge, offensive to us like pride, by a behaviour haughty and over-bearing; but though it escapes our indignation, it excites our contempt, by endeavouring in an indirect manner to attract our attention, and to obtain our applause, instead of extorting it by superior merit. A man of real abilities and strength of mind, may be gratified by the praise of his contemporaries, but he will not stoop to court it. Vanity, however, in the female mind, is by no means so censurable a weakness, as in the mind of man; nor does the existence of it in my opinion argue the same imbecility of understanding in your sex as in ours. In women it dictates and inspires those various arts and allurements, by which they captivate and ensnare our hearts; and provided they employ no dissimulation, and practise no guile for this purpose, they are perfectly justifiable in setting off their charms to the best advantage, and in adopting every innocent blandishment which can secure their empire over the human heart.—But as vanity, when prevalent in the female character, in an extravagant degree, is often accompanied with a certain giddiness and volatility of mind, and with an inclination to talkativeness, it often defeats its own end, by its pertness and loquacity, which instead of obtaining our indulgence, commonly excites our disgust. This pertness and loquacity indeed, are sometimes mistaken by shallow thinkers and doating parents, for vivacity and wit. But in reality, they

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are widely different: The one is like the noisy and monotonous roaring of a flight of rooks, the other is like the sprightly and varied notes of the linnet, which please the ear, and delight the imagination of the hearer. For my own part, I have no objection to the exertion of female eloquence in conversation, provided it be not too long continued, or too ostentatiously displayed, as it serves to fill up a blank in promiscuous discourse, and to relieve those who are not so much disposed to take a share in it. I would only object to too many of these female orators opening upon us at once, as such noisy eloquence, like the harsh music of discordant instruments, playing out of time and tune, is grating to the ear, and excites our disgust, instead of contributing to our entertainment. I observed, that every innocent blandishment may be fairly adopted by your sex, in order to secure your empire over our hearts. It must be remembered however, my fair readers, that in the intercourse which subsists betwixt the sexes, singular prudence, caution and reserve are expected, and must be practised, upon your part, in the conduct of this intercourse. The concealment of your sentiments in favour of any individual of our sex, for whom you may feel a predilection, is not only allowable but prudential. Dissimulation, however, of every kind must be carefully avoided, as in every instance a mean stratagem, utterly inconsistent with sincerity and candour; and in many instances a stratagem of studied deceit. But every art, even those suggested

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and prompted by vanity, consistent with ingenuity and honour, may be very lawfully adopted by your sex, in order to subjugate our hearts to the mild and temperate dominion established by the influence of your charms.

That vanity, which, when prevalent in your sex, in a moderate degree, I am not much disposed to censure or condemn with severity, appears, as you will observe, Ladies, very early and remarkably in the female mind. You must have often contemplated a little miss, as yet an infant and scarce arrived at the age of childhood, surveying her figure and fine clothes with much complacency and self-admiration, tricking up her doll with care and correctness, and discovering a solicitude to emulate its finery by her own personal charms and attire. Shall we call this complacency and self-gratulation, a radical weakness in the human mind? Perhaps it would not be improper to call it such. Yet in my opinion, it would not be contrary to the dictates of reason and sound philosophy to say, that it is a strong propensity implanted in your nature for an important purpose, that of attracting our admiration, by the means it suggests for the improvement of your charms; and that the vanity from which it proceeds, is a plant of luxuriant growth indeed, but which when pruned, bent, and trained in a proper direction, might be rendered an useful and ornamental shrub in the garden of beauty, pleasing to the eye, and no way noxious in its flavour or its fruit.

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Upon the whole, I will venture to assert, that that characteristic quality in your nature, denominated Vanity, which, under all its forms, must be acknowledged to be a real weakness, kept under due restraint, and within proper bounds, is of all your frailties the least reprehensible, and is the least injurious to your virtue or your honour. But I caution you, Ladies, to beware of its excess, which will plunge you in guilt, and terminate in your ignominy and shame. Of this general and characteristical weakness of your nature, there are various species, and various degrees of blame annexed to those species, in proportion to their preponderance in the female character. There is the vanity of beauty, the vanity of wealth, the vanity of rank and external magnificence, and the vanity of fashionable and intellectual accomplishments. Of all these species our sex are most apt to pardon the vanity of beauty, and even to allow its claim to our homage, provided it be not accompanied with arrogance. So fascinating is this quality, and such indulgence doth it obtain from us, even in spite of our sounder judgement!

The vanity, which is apt to spring up in the female breast, from the consciousness of intellectual accomplishments, would perhaps be the most tolerable of all; but as this consciousness has a tendency to engender and foment pride, a quality much more offensive and disagreeable than vanity, it becomes, when productive of this effect, the object of our aversion and disgust.

I am indeed of opinion, that there is no species of vanity so prevalent in your sex, Ladies, as the vanity of rank and external magnificence—a vanity, which has unsettled many a head, and corrupted many a heart among you; and hath in numberless instances proved equally prejudicial to your virtue and your happiness. Of the melancholy and fatal effects of this species of vanity, the History of Miss Arabella Grenville, recorded in the following Letter, afforded a memorable and affecting example.

LETTER XX.

HISTORY OF

MISS ARABELLA GRENVILLE.

MISS ARABELLA GRENVILLE, was the daughter of an English Counsellor of considerable eminence, from whose affectionate attachment and indulgence, she had received a very liberal education; and as she inherited from nature an excellent understanding, an elegant person, and a fine face; she was, by the fortunate combination of these various circumstances, aided by the influence of some genteel relations, introduced with singular advantage into all the gay and polite circles of fashionable life.

Though Miss Grenville was naturally possessed of good dispositions and of a cultivated taste, improved by reading and conversation; it was evident to her more judicious friends, that somewhat vain as she was of her charms, and fond of external pomp and grandeur, there was great hazard, that both her

dispositions and her taste might be gradually vitiated, by her too general intercourse with persons of high rank and polished manners, but no way remarkable for intellectual accomplishments or rigid virtue. Her own good sense, however, and virtuous principles, proved for sometime a firm barrier against the increasing tide of dissipation and folly, which threatened to immerge her in its overwhelming gulf. This barrier was rendered still firmer by an accession of strength, which it received from an acquaintance she had lately formed with a young gentleman of the name of Howell, of small fortune, but possessed of eminent talents, and distinguished by a graceful person, and elegant accomplishments. As his uncommon merit procured him an easy introduction to the family of Mr Grenville, the acquaintance which he had formed and studiously cultivated with his daughter, soon ripened into an affection and friendship, which was cemented by mutual esteem and confidence; and which daily increasing from familiar intercourse and indulgence, had for its object an union of hearts and interests in the matrimonial state, as essential to their mutual happiness. Though this union was earnestly desired by both, they had too much prudence to think of entering into it at present, in Mr Howell's dependent situation; perfectly aware, that by such a conduct they would involve themselves in difficulties which they might probably find insurmountable. Having concealed their mutual attachment

ment and mutual wishes, in the fond hope that a fortunate combination of circumstances might afterwards justify the completion of their union, by obtaining the consent and approbation of their friends, Mr Howell prepared to set out for India, where, by the interest of his relations, aided by his own merit, he had obtained the lucrative office of Secretary to the Governor General of that country. After giving to, and receiving from his beloved Arabella, pledges of their mutual and indissoluble affection, he took a tender and affecting leave of the idol of his heart, resolved to brave every danger and to encounter every hardship to which he might be subjected; animated as he was by the hope of returning in a few years, with a fortune that would render him independent in his circumstances, and contribute to their mutual happiness.

In the meantime, Mr Howell pursued his voyage with success, cherishing in his mind the delightful expectation of his future union with his beloved Arabella; damped, however, by the dread of losing, by some disastrous and unforeseen event, the dear object of his tender solicitude and unalterable affection; and after five months sailing, arrived in safety at the capital of our Indian possessions.

During the three first years, the concerted correspondence betwixt these tender lovers, was conducted on both sides with the most exact punctuality; and they poured forth, in their reciprocal letters,

vows and protestations of eternal fidelity and affection with equal sincerity and fervour. At length an alteration in the warmth of expression and punctuality of correspondence took place on the part of Miss Grenville; the cause of which will be explained in the following Letters.

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LETTER XXI.

IT was suggested, in the preceding Letter, that there was one feature in the character of Miss Grenville, which, in the apprehension of her more judicious friends, might intoxicate her mind and vitiate her dispositions; that of vanity, or a love of external pomp and magnificence. This feature predominated in the character of Miss Grenville, in a degree beyond what she herself imagined. From the date of her acquaintance with Mr Howell, to his departure from England, and for some time after, while his image was present to her mind, her vanity was not much perceived, and did not operate in any great degree upon her conduct. But after the impression made by Mr Howell's virtues and accomplishments, had been somewhat effaced by the succession of amusements, the routine of company, and the glitter of false magnificence, which began to dazzle her imagination and take possession of her heart, a total alteration gradually took place in her character, and

in about four years after Mr Howell's departure for India, she forgot her plighted faith and her solemn vows to the tenderest and most constant of lovers—vows, which, though now forgotten or disregarded, sometime after served, upon recollection, to remind her of her falsehood, and to upbraid her with her guilt.

Among the numerous visitors which the beauty and accomplishments of Miss Grenville attracted to her father's house, the Earl of Bellamont, a nobleman of specious manners but of unprincipled conduct, was one of the most distinguished. This nobleman, struck with the external form and graces of Miss Grenville, solicited, in a few weeks after his introduction to her acquaintance, that hand, which had been pledged to Mr Howell, but which was now surrendered to Lord Bellamont, for the sake of the coronet and coat of arms that were to decorate her carriage. Several weeks were spent after her marriage, in receiving and returning the visits of her numerous acquaintance, who crowded to Bellamont House, in order to pour forth liberal expressions of the joy they felt on her exaltation; professions, not a little tinctured with envy, as well as marked by insincerity and falsehood. Intoxicated for a while by the pageantry of greatness, she seemed to enjoy the dignity to which she was raised. The charm, however, which fascinated her imagination, and seduced her heart, was now upon the point of being dispelled, and bitter repentance was to take place of promised joy and

an-

anticipated triumph. Within less than six months after her exaltation to the Peerage, she was destined to experience, from her profligate Lord, the most mortifying neglect, and the most degrading insults. Tired of his new married Countess, whose charms were now become familiar to him, Bellamont haunted after that variety of enjoyment which suited his polluted imagination and corrupted heart; and, dead to every sentiment of remorse or shame, he lavished on kept mistresses and prostitutes, those caresses and affections, which were due to the woman to whom he had sworn perpetual fidelity at the altar. Stung with jealousy, indignation and rage, her justly offended pride could no longer bear such outrageous insults. She at first remonstrated and complained, and from complaint and remonstrance, proceeded to reproaches and upbraidings of her abandoned and unprincipled husband; but all her efforts were ineffectual to reclaim him from his profligacy. Determined, therefore, at last, to separate herself as much as possible from the society of a man, who had proved himself unworthy both of her esteem and of her love, she shut herself up from company, and brooded in silence and solitude over her accumulated sufferings, which by sinking her into deep melancholy, visibly impaired her health. Being far advanced in her pregnancy, she was soon after delivered of a daughter, to whom she gave her own ill-fated name; and when she had in some degree recovered from the weakness occasioned by child-birth, she wrote a letter to her worth-

worthless husband, requesting, that as she now found herself in a rapid decline, she might be permitted to consign the charge of her infant daughter to the care of a Lady, who she was sure would execute the trust reposed in her with fidelity and honour. This request she easily obtained from Lord Bellamont, who, from the apprehension of being thought an unnatural parent, rather than from affection, settled on the child ten thousand pounds, as her portion, the interest of which he allotted for her maintenance and education, while at the same time he *destined* an annuity of a thousand pounds, as an aliment to his wife.

Lady Bellamont, having committed the charge of her infant daughter to Mrs Townly, a widow Lady, of singular prudence and discretion, her intimate friend, she prepared with pious resignation for that awful event, the gradual approach of which was perceived by all her acquaintance, and which she herself was conscious was not far distant. Her innocent child however, abandoned as she was by her unnatural father, was during the languor and weakness of her decline, the object of her tenderest solicitude and of her warmest love; and she intrusted the care of her education with the most affectionate earnestness to her friend.

LETTER XXII.

In the mean time, Mr Howell having made a small fortune in India, as the reward of his faithful services during his short residence in that country, and succeeded by the death of an uncle to a much larger in his own, arrived in England after an absence of four years, to the great joy of his friends, who heartily congratulated him on his arrival. His first enquiry was after the mistress of his heart, the dear object of his most ardent and constant affection, and of whose marriage he had received no information from his correspondents, who were strangers to his engagements. But what was his consternation and grief, when he learnt, that the faithless woman had violated her solemn vows, and sacrificed her plighted love at the shrine of vanity! The sudden shock which he received from this unexpected information, and the grief which he felt from the disappointment of his fondest hopes, for some time overwhelmed his spirits and affected his health; but when he heard of the

the barbarous treatment and severe sufferings of his once beloved Arabella, all the generosity and tenderness of his nature were awakened within him.—He earnestly wished for an opportunity of seeing, of sympathizing with, and of comforting to the utmost of his power, a Lady, whose image could never be obliterated from his heart, and whose sufferings he considered as more than sufficient to atone for her guilt. The interview which he was so desirous to obtain, chance at last afforded him. Having called one day on Mrs Townley, who was his particular acquaintance, he was ushered in by a servant into the parlour, where Lady Bellamont herself was then conversing with her friend. The sudden and unexpected appearance of Mr Howell, shook the Countess' whole frame, brought forth a cold perspiration on her pale face, and threw her into a deep swoon, which suspended for a considerable time her vital functions, and threatened her dissolution. Mr Howell, much affected with the scene he had witnessed, prudently retired, leaving the care of Lady Bellamont to her friend. Anxious, however, as he was to receive information of her recovery, he sent a note a few hours after his return to his own lodgings, to Mrs Townley, enquiring with the tenderest and most affectionate concern for Lady Bellamont's health, and requesting that Mrs Townley would obtain leave for him to wait upon her, as soon as her health would permit. He learnt from Mrs Townley, in answer to his enquiry, that Lady Bellamont, whose history was well

well known to her friend, had recovered from the faint, though she was exceedingly weak, and would, if her strength permitted, send Mr Howell a Letter next day, appointing a time for his visit. On receiving this note, he waited with much anxiety for the expected Letter, which was sent him next forenoon. It was dictated in the following terms:

My dear Mr Howell,

It is with the deepest shame and sorrow, that I assume a designation that reminds me at once of my folly and guilt, in violating my plighted vows, and sacrificing my honour and happiness to an empty title, when I might have assumed the respected and beloved name of Howell, as the sure pledge of that solid comfort and genuine felicity, which by my foolish ambition and intemperate vanity, I have justly forfeited. Can you, my dear Howell, forgive that infidelity which covers me with lasting ignominy, which has been the source of so much misery to us both, and the painful remembrance of which, will soon bring me to an untimely grave. May my fatal errors and misconduct prove a salutary warning to the giddy and the vain of my own sex, and may they learn wisdom, moderation and fidelity in their engagements, from my preposterous ambition! I trust that my repentance, which hath been as bitter as sincere, will expiate my guilt, and through the mercy of God, and merits of my Saviour, obtain its forgiveness. Your forgiveness, my dearest friend, I am from the generosity

sity of your nature, and your not yet extinguished affection for me, encouraged to hope for; but sensible as I am of the near approach of my dissolution, I wish, if I am able to withstand the shock of seeing the man whom I have so greatly injured, to receive to morrow, at twelve o'clock, his last visit, and to derive the only consolation I am capable of receiving upon earth, from hearing him pronounce his forgiveness of his once beloved and dying

ARABELLA BELLAMONT.

On receiving this Letter, all the tenderness and affection of Mr Howell revived at once. The deepest grief and sorrow for the loss of a woman whom he had once so ardently loved, and whose remembrance could never be erased from his heart, took possession of his mind; and after passing a sleepless night, he hurried to the house of Mrs Townley, exactly at the hour which the Countess had appointed for receiving his visits—but he came a few minutes too late.—Lady Bellamont had suffered the last pang of expiring nature, and pronounced the name of Howell with her latest breath.

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LETTER XXIII.

ANOTHER very remarkable weakness, Ladies, in the female character, deserving your particular attention and correction, is an extravagant passion for admiration. This indeed, is one of those weaknesses which peculiarly disqualify you for being the agreeable friends and companions of our sex; for how can that woman be a valuable or agreeable friend, who wishes to attract the regards of every one to herself, and to be admired and complimented by all her acquaintance? It hath been said by many of your sex, and it hath been said with truth, that ours are commonly more captivated by the beauty of the external form, than by good sense and intellectual accomplishments; and hence, many women are induced to bestow more attention upon the embellishments of that form, than upon the cultivation of their minds. The influence of beauty, it must be acknowledged, is powerful; but trust me, Ladies, it will not secure your empire over one heart which is worth the trouble

of

of your conquest. If you wish to give to beauty its full effect, you must superadd to it moral and intellectual excellence, accompanied with good humour, which will render its dominion over our hearts irresistible; for though beauty, separately considered, may draw the gaze of admiration, and excite a transitory passion; it cannot, without the aid of the qualities above-mentioned, excite a rational, or secure a permanent affection. But as that sorceress, Beauty, is too successful in her enchantments with the generality of mankind, she obtains by her fascinating arts, a temporary dominion at least, over a great part of our sex, who voluntarily subject themselves to her arbitrary and capricious tyranny. Hence it is, that many of your sex, accustomed to be adored and idolized as goddesses, can scarce be contented with the love of their votaries, unless they likewise obtain their homage. It is owing to this passion for admiration, naturally strong in the female mind, and sometimes carried beyond all reasonable bounds, that many become arrant coquettes, and consequently fail in becoming agreeable companions; and it is to the same cause that we may attribute most of the disappointments and misfortunes of their lives. When a woman is actuated by this preposterous passion in an extravagant degree, she is in great hazard of sacrificing to it all the softer and tenderer affections of the heart, whose indulgence, under the restrictions of reason and prudence, might have rendered her an agreeable companion and friend, and secured her

own

own happiness, as well as that of the person who happened to be the object of those affections.

The excess of the desire of admiration, Ladies, which in a moderate degree is allowable in the young and unmarried part of your sex, to which part however, I am sorry to observe, it is not confined, must I believe, in a great measure be imputed to the fulsome flattery of some of ours; flattery, which is often the heedless effusion of impertinence and folly, but sometimes the studied language of deceit, and adopted for the purpose of ruining your virtue, by offering incense, always grateful when delicately applied, to your vanity. Be on your guard therefore, my amiable friends, against both; and while your good sense will enable you to perceive and to despise the former, let your acutest discernment, accompanied with a vigilant and constant circumspection, be employed in order to detect and to defeat the latter; and when detected, let it become the object of your severest censure and indignation. Remember, Ladies, that you were not intended to be contemplated by us with a distant veneration; nor, charming as many of you are, to be regarded solely as the objects of our admiration. No, my fair ones; The gentle and attractive qualities of your minds, the tender and engaging affections of your hearts, the beauty of your external forms, and the bewitching graces of your deportment, clearly indicate, that you were formed to be the objects of our esteem and of our love.—Keep these ends, therefore, continually in view.—

Restrain the passion for admiration within its proper bounds; and as you were created in order to be *an help-mate for man*, in order to soften the masculine qualities of his nature by your milder graces, to chear his solitary, as well as to soothe his melancholy hours, and to alleviate the weight of calamity by your tender sympathy and participation, let genuine benignity and kindness sweeten your temper, beam in your eye, and irradiate your countenance. Cultivate those graces and accomplishments which conciliate love rather than excite admiration, if you wish to become, what nature intended you to be, the endearing friends and companions of man.

The unhappy effects of neglecting the cultivation of these graces and accomplishments, and of indulging the passion for admiration to unbounded excess, were strongly exemplified in the character of Lady Charlotte Mandeville, delineated in the following Letter.

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LETTER XXIV.

LADY CHARLOTTE MANDEVILLE, after having finished the usual course of education, which fashion has prescribed to Ladies of quality, was early introduced into the world with all the advantages which a fine person, regular features, a good complexion, and a respectable set of connexions, could give.

She had scarcely entered her eighteenth year, when she began to be distinguished for her beauty, which like charity, hides a multitude of sins as well as foibles and imperfections, that usually adhere to the possession of this envied quality. Caressed by her parents and relations, flattered by her servants, admired and complimented by a crowd of Lords and Commoners, who frequented her father's house, her giddy head was intoxicated by the fumes of incense which were diffused around her, and she became insupportably vain and arrogant, the object of the hatred and envy of her own sex, and of the contempt of the

more sensible part of ours. Lady Charlotte, however, who had already figured for several years in the *beau monde*, and whose beauty was still in its prime, continued to draw a train of admirers and lovers, who like captives dragged at her chariot wheels served to grace her triumph; and she imputed both the envy and the hatred of the Ladies, to the painful lustre of her superior charms, which she supposed they were unable to bear. During the time of her splendid career, and the succession of her numerous conquests, amorous sonnets, tender billet-doux, and whining lamentations, were sent her from many a sighing swain; but though she kept them as the trophies of her victories, she only laughed at the pain they described, and with cruel pleasure, even enjoyed it as a proof of the irresistible power of her beauty. She was seriously addressed by several persons of rank and fortune, who earnestly solicited her heart and hand in marriage; but Lady Charlotte had no heart to bestow, and continued obstinate to all the solicitations both of her parents and lovers, preferring the glory of subduing and domineering over a thousand hearts, to the circumscribed dominion over one, an object much too mean for the boundless ambition of Lady Charlotte Mandeville.

The unrelenting cruelty, however, of this despotic sovereign, began at last to render her odious, and even contemptible, to many of her former admirers, in proportion as the wounds inflicted by her beauty were cured by her arrogance. Her charms likewise

wise now began to fade, and her reign drew to a period. She had the mortification too, to survive both her empire and her charms; and with all the jealousy and rage of a monarch, who sees one province after another torn from his dominions, she beheld her admirers and lovers dropping off by turns, and perceived herself left alone, an object of contempt and scorn to all her acquaintance. For some time she had recourse to powder, in order to conceal her grey hairs, and to rouge, to restore the wonted bloom to her wan complexion, and the former smoothness to her wrinkled features; but all her powder, paint and cosmetics, had lost their efficacy. She found herself totally forsaken, and lovers and friends kept at a distance from her.

Her character, in consequence of her situation, now underwent a total alteration; for, from an arrant coquette, she became a downright prude, or professed she-saint. She now rails with great piety and virulence at the profligacy of the times, and severely censures the immorality of the men, and the scandalous indecency of the women, devoutly thanking God that she is not an adulteress, like some of her acquaintance; and, that she has *providentially* escaped those snares, and been enabled to withstand those temptations, which have proved fatal to the reputation and virtue of many of her sex.

LETTER XXV.

THE desire of dominion too, so deeply implanted in the human mind, is a passion, which predominates often, in no inconsiderable degree in the female breast, and disqualifies those in whom it predominates for being the friends and companions of man. Pope considers

" The love of pleasure, and the love of sway,"

as distinguishing ingredients in the female character. But intemperate sway, Ladies, is, upon your part, illegal and usurped—is by no means for the credit of your sex, and is inconsistent with the rank you hold in society. As your friend, therefore I caution you, to beware of claiming, or of exercising a *governing* power. This passion for dominion, so dear to the female heart, appears infinitely diversified in its various modes of establishing its authority, in proportion to the difficulties it has to encounter, and the opposition it has to surmount in the accomplishment of

of its purpose; and the means it employs for securing this dominion, or to give it a softer name, this influence over our sex, are more or less gentle, according to the different characters of the Ladies, who adopt them. It will be readily perceived, that these observations relate in particular to the married state, in which the greatest scope is afforded for the establishment of dominion on either side.

As human characters are so exceedingly various, it must necessarily happen, that amidst the diversity of tempers and passions by which both sexes are actuated, there must frequently be a collision of jarring interests and inclinations, which like a rivulet confined within narrow bounds, spend their force within the limits by which they are confined. In this narrow channel, however, the stream often rising to an inundation, rushes forward with a turbulent noise, and precipitate violence, carrying every thing before it that would divert its current, or stop its course.—It is only when the rivulet flows in a clear, equable and perennial stream, that it refreshes the meadows through which it runs, and the flowers that adorn its banks. To vary the stile of metaphor, as in music a few discords are necessary to constitute harmony; so in the matrimonial state, a certain diversity of temper and inclination, but with as few discordant ingredients as possible, will often contribute to the harmony of that state. If there are many discordant qualities in the parties who enter into the married state, or if, Ladies, ambitious of dominion, you attempt to *rule*

your husbands, be assured of it, that the harmony of the matrimonial life will be completely destroyed; and that by such desire of sway, you will totally disqualify yourselves for being what nature intended you to be, the agreeable companions of our sex. But, while I reprobate all attempts upon your part to govern your husbands—attempts, which reflect discredit upon them, and ignominy upon yourselves; do not imagine, that I wish to preclude any prudent endeavour to influence them by mild persuasion, by the gentleness of your manners, and by the complacency of your deportment. You have even a just title to reason and remonstrate with them, at least in private, but I would seriously advise you, to proceed no farther. If, after your reasoning and remonstrances, your husbands continue obstinate, uncomplying, and deaf to the force of argument, as may sometimes happen to be the case, it will be wiser on your part to submit than to continue the contest—a measure, by which, if accompanied with good humour, you will gain your point more effectually, than by a perseverance in argumentation, which serves to irritate rather than to convince. The arts of insinuation, you may certainly lawfully and honourably employ; but let them not appear artificial, or assumed for a particular purpose. Let them spring from the native gentleness of your minds, and from those complacent and conciliating manners which are among the most captivating features in the female character.

Some of your sex, however, Ladies, attempt a shorter

shorter, but not a surer way, to obtain that dominion over their husbands, which they are ambitious to acquire, and the exercise of which constitutes one of the most odious traits of the female nature. Of this dominion, Mrs Thrall afforded a notorious and striking example.

Mrs Thrall was the daughter of Dr. Manson, a Physician of reputation, in London, who had bestowed great pains in the cultivation of her understanding, but had totally neglected the discipline of her passions, the correction of her temper, and the melioration of her heart. Miss Manson, accordingly, possessed as she was, of an acute discernment and good sense, exhibited early symptoms of unbounded pride, of an ungovernable temper, and overbearing manners. Notwithstanding those glaring faults in her character, which were either unperceived, or overlooked by the partiality of her parents, and which she indeed concealed as much as possible from the eye of her acquaintance, her beauty and accomplishments drew many admirers, who, dazzled by the splendour of her charms, had not attended to the imperiousness of her disposition, or the haughtiness of her mind. Among the crowd of blind admirers, who paid their court to Miss Manson, Mr Thrall, a young man of plain sense, of good dispositions, and of a very opulent fortune, obtained the preference in her estimation, not from any attachment to his person, but to his estate; from a conviction she had, that she could mould the character of her lover to her own taste, and acquire that influence

influence and dominion over him, which was the predominant passion of her heart. In this opinion she was not deceived. Mr Thrall having declared his attachment to his admired and accomplished Mistress, and settled on her a very liberal jointure, they were soon after united in marriage. In a few weeks after the celebration of their nuptials, Mr Thrall found with surprise and sorrow, a total alteration in the behaviour of his dear spouse, and that instead of the enraptured and doating lover, he must now become the tame, patient and acquiescing husband. At first he remonstrated gently on what he conceived to be unreasonable in her sentiments or conduct, but he was answered with haughtiness and disdain. In company indeed, Mrs Thrall's own good sense imposed a curb upon her temper, though it occasionally broke forth in sudden gusts of passion, in spite of all her efforts to conceal it. If her husband had unfortunately dropped a word in conversation of which she disapproved, or had, from the sociality of his disposition, called upon any occasion for a bottle extraordinary for the entertainment of his friend, the glance of contempt and indignation shot from her eye, covered him with confusion, and palsied his tongue. Full of good nature, but entirely destitute of that steady resolution and spirit, which would have enabled him to withstand and to repel the violent bursts of passion of this imperious termagant, and tired with ineffectual opposition to her arbitrary dominion, Mr Thrall submitted at last with tame acquiescence to her sovereign

reign authority. Mrs Thrall, having thus obtained a complete ascendant over the mind of her husband, now broken by the yoke of servitude, all his thoughts, words and actions, were henceforth conformed to her will; and while the arrogance and imperiousness of the one rendered her the object of universal dislike, the good natured pusillanimity of the other, excited the pity of his friends, provoked the sarcasms of his enemies, and exposed him to the ridicule of all his acquaintance.

LET-

LETTER XXVI.

ANOTHER weakness in the female character, Ladies, which it behoves you to guard against with peculiar care, is Credulity, or a misplaced confidence in our sex.

As the virtue and happiness of both sexes depend so much upon a well regulated intercourse betwixt them, I cannot help feeling an honest indignation arise in my mind, at the contemplation of a vice, too prevalent among the worthless and unprincipled part of my own sex, which, by abusing the confidence of some of yours, tends to destroy the good effects which would result from a virtuous connection with them—

" Plucks the rose
" From the fair forehead of an innocent love,
" And plants a blister there."

I am naturally led, therefore, to pass the severest censure on that base and infamous seduction of some unhappy individuals of your sex, which upon our part

part is the effect of exorbitant passion, of artful stratagem, and of deliberate and premeditated villainy; upon yours, of credulity, love, and misplaced confidence. Though our sex are the natural guardians, and ought to be the protectors of the honour and virtue of yours, I blush for them when I reflect, that many of them are, with a meanness and perfidy which stamp indelible infamy upon their characters, the betrayers and violators of both. As this seduction is a crime of the deepest dye, and indicates a total extinction of sensibility as well as principle, it ought to accumulate on the head of the wretch who is guilty of it, the united execrations of your sex, and the greatest abhorrence, contempt, and indignation of his own. Till the known libertine is hooted out of every decent and respectable society, or at least, till he is treated with some peculiar marks of detestation and ignominy, upon account of the irreparable injury he has done to the reputation of the fair ones he has ruined, and the disgrace he has brought on their miserable relations; be assured of it, that your virtue and honour will always be in danger from his machinations and intrigues. Were not the vice of which I speak, too common, and too much sanctioned by the unprincipled manners of the age, such detestation and ignominy, could not fail to be his lot. But, even sanctioned as this vice is by these manners, were it not at the same time too much overlooked, and too slightly censured by your sex, (forgive me for saying so,) it would not be so prevalent among ours. If the liber-

libertine were universally reprobated by the wise and virtuous of both sexes, he could not, dead as he is to every sentiment of remorse and shame, hold up his head, or withstand their united contempt and indignation. You have no conception, Ladies, of the effect of your contempt and reproof, even on the most profligate, when administered with propriety and judgment, and delivered with seriousness and dignity, or with keen and pointed irony, as circumstances and occasions may require. A rebuke of this kind, delivered by a beautiful and virtuous woman to an abandoned libertine, would produce an effect upon him, similar to that produced on Satan, by the reproof of the angel Zephon:

" So spake the cherub, and his grave rebuke,
" Severe in youthful beauty, added grace
" Invincible: Abash'd the devil stood,
" And felt how awful goodness is; and saw
" Virtue, in her own shape how lovely—saw,
" And pined his loss *."

I have indeed heard rebukes delivered by some Ladies to gentlemen of this stamp, but they were by no means so severe, either in matter or in manner, as to check and confound them; on the contrary, those gentlemen finding themselves pleasantly rallied upon account of amours which ought to have covered them with infamy, are rather encouraged to continue their gallantries. Such slight censure, serves only to stimulate

* Paradise Lost, Book IV.

mulate the cruel spoiler to attempt the virtue of those Ladies themselves, and to endeavour to sully the beauty of that flower, whose brilliant colours, once blasted, can be restored no more.

I know that there are some women credulous enough to entertain the idea, that a reformed rake makes one of the best of husbands, and I believe there are many who are bold enough to risk the experiment. Animated by the hope, and ambitious of the glory of conquering a hero, who has triumphed over the weakness of many of her sex, the female Quixote, in the true spirit of chivalry, meets him in the field, and directs all the artillery of her charms against that heart which was never irrevocably fixed upon one object. If the Lady happen to be successful, she may be permitted to proclaim it, and to enjoy her triumph; if she happen to fail, as many Ladies have done, there remains nothing for the unhappy fair one, but to bear her disgrace and defeat as patiently and quietly as she can, and to lament her own weakness and folly, in hazarding her virtue and reputation against such odds. Your sense and virtue, your beauty and good humour, Ladies, have, I confess, a chance to contribute greatly to the reformation and happiness of a rake, whose principles are not altogether corrupted; but the experiment even in this case is hazardous, and the success is uncertain: "*Can the Ethiopian change his colour, or the Leopard his spots*"? The difficulty of conquering bad habits is not easily surmounted; the taste for variety of enjoyment, which

which has so long been indulged, may return, and your charms, lovely as many of you are, may be unable to fix that heart which has been accustomed to waver in its affections, and to change its object. Hazard not therefore, my too credulous fair ones, the happiness of your life upon the doubtful issue of the reformation of a rake after marriage, either by the influence of your beauty or your accomplishments. Let him evince, at least to your own satisfaction, and to that of your most judicious friends, that his reformation is far advanced, before you venture on a connection which death or a divorce can alone dissolve.

In the mean time, let unprincipled rakes and libertines of every denomination be banished from your society; let the lightning of your eye be darted against them, and let the glance of your indignation cover them with confusion; for they are the invariable foes of the virtue and happiness of womankind, as will too evidently appear from the melancholy History of Miss Emilia Somerville, recorded in the following Letters.

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LETTER XXVII.

HISTORY OF MISS SOMERVILLE.

MISS EMILIA SOMERVILLE was the daughter of Mr Somerville, a gentleman of considerable fortune, and of an ancient family in the West of England. His wife, an agreeable and accomplished woman, having died in a few years after their marriage in child-birth, he was left with two children, a boy and a girl; the former about six years of age, the latter only a few days old at the time of her mother's death. As Mr Somerville was much attached to his children, and at the same time solicitous for their improvement and comfortable settlement in the world, he resolved to spare no expence in giving them an education suitable to their condition and prospects in life.

Having perceived in his son, early indications of a promising genius, and being flattered by his rapid progress in Greek and Latin, which he was able to

read easily before he was sixteen, he determined to educate him for one of the learned professions, of which he left the choice to himself. As the young gentleman, therefore, discovered a taste for the science of Medicine, he was educated for this profession at Oxford. Having, after his education in that seminary of learning, been sent to London, where he continued three years, under the tuition of the most celebrated professors, in the different branches of medicine, he set out upon his travels to France, Germany, and Holland, in order to improve himself in his favourite science, under foreign professors of the most established reputation. After spending two years at the most distinguished foreign universities, he returned to his own country, with every advantage which genius, education, and assiduous study could bestow; and having taken his degrees in his profession, he set up as a Physician, in London, where he soon acquired a very distinguished character.

Mr Somerville having had the pleasure to see his son, whom we shall now call Dr Somerville, settled in so advantageous and respectable a situation in the world, had no object that could occasion his solicitude but the education of his daughter, which now began to engage his serious attention. After having laid a good foundation therefore at home, he sent her when she was about fifteen years old, to a boarding school in Bristol, where she was instructed in the usual branches of female education, in which she made singular progress; returning to her father's house highly

highly accomplished for her age, which was then eighteen.

As Miss Somerville possessed an amiable disposition, as well as an accomplished mind, and was eminently distinguished by her filial affection to her father; the old man doated on her with all the fondness of parental love, and as he had long since given up all thoughts of a second marriage, he devoted the greatest part of his time to the innocent pleasures and useful occupations of a country life, and spent his days in uninterrupted harmony and happiness in the company of his beloved Emilia.

Mr Somerville and his daughter passed two years in this agreeable domestic society, exhibiting in every part of their conduct the strongest proofs of an affectionate and reciprocal attachment to each other. The Doctor, however, having come on a visit to his father, at Somerville Hall, near Gloucester, was desirous of carrying his sister with him to London, in order to give the last polish to her education, by getting her introduced to genteel company, by his more distinguished female friends, and affording her an opportunity of visiting the places of the most fashionable resort in the metropolis; but as he knew that his father would feel the loss of his daughter's society, should he be left alone, he intreated him to accompany them; a favour he easily obtained.

Miss Somerville, who along with a fine face, and an elegant person, possessed a large share of good sense and good nature, united with a heart full of

sensibility and tenderness, attracted, upon her first appearance in the polite world, the notice of several young gentlemen of fortune, who seemed ambitious of acquiring her favour. Among these, Sir John Waldgrave, who had lately come to the possession of a handsome estate, and was at the same time distinguished by the graces of his person and address, discovered a more particular attachment to Miss Somerville than any of the others. This young Baronet, therefore, in the hope of inspiring her with some degree of that passion, which already glowed in his heart, got himself introduced to her brother, who gave him an invitation to his house, which he very readily accepted.

As Sir John possessed not only a cultivated understanding, but a genteel person, and easy and engaging manners, he soon made an impression with these advantages upon the susceptible heart of Miss Somerville. His views, however, though artfully concealed, were base and dishonourable; but perceiving that he had to do with a woman of virtue, whose friends were watchful, and somewhat suspicious of his designs, he resolved, in order to prevent either of them from taking the alarm, to make at least honourable pretensions. With this view, he declared himself a candidate for Miss Somerville's affection; and solicited her hand in marriage, with a dissembled ardour and tenderness, which too easily imposed upon her unsuspecting mind, and made too deep an impression upon her yielding heart. In a word, Miss Somer-

Somerville confessed herself neither indifferent to his merit nor to his love, and upon his earnest solicitation permitted him to mention the affair to her father.

It may be easily conceived, that so advantageous a match could not but be agreeable to Mr Somerville, in case Sir John's character should appear upon inquiry to be favourable. Having applied, therefore, to some of his friends, who were considered as men of honour, though in reality their principles were not much different from his, they palliated his vices and concealed his crimes, when they were made acquainted with his professed matrimonial intentions, representing his former connections with the fair sex as ordinary affairs of gallantry, which they doubted not would now be at an end.

Though neither Mr Somerville nor his son were satisfied with Sir John Waldgrave's former conduct, they were willing to hope that marriage might reform him, and in that hope gave their consent to the match; the accomplishment of which, it was mutually agreed to defer till after the death of a rich uncle, from whom Sir John had great expectations, and who was then supposed to be dangerously ill; lest this uncle, disapproving of the scheme, should, in resentment of his conduct, disappoint his views of succession to his fortune.

LETTER XXVIII.

AS Sir John Waldgrave had now permission to visit Miss Somerville, upon the footing of an honourable lover, who, it was expected, would soon become her husband; he paid his respects to her frequently, but had hitherto been always very decent in his addresses. Having now, however, as he imagined, thoroughly established his influence over her heart, he resolved at once boldly to accomplish the plot, which his intriguing head and corrupted heart had been gradually ripening for execution; and the dæmon of malignity and mischief soon furnished him with the opportunity he desired.

Being informed, that Mr Somerville and his son were engaged to sup one evening at the house of a friend of the Doctor's, who was a batchelor, and that Miss Somerville chose to continue at home, he determined to wait upon her that evening; and in order to facilitate the scheme he was meditating, he contrived to send the servants out of the way. Upon entering Miss Somerville's apartment, he found her reclining

reclining on a sofa in an undress, reading a book, in which she was so much interested, that she scarce perceived his approach, till he sat down by her side.

Struck with the contemplation of that innocence and beauty, which in the mind of a man of principle and honour might have excited love and tenderness, but would, at the same time, have checked the irregularity, and restrained the violence of passion; he felt no other effect from them than to stimulate him to the gratification of his impetuous desires. Callous as he was to remorse, and dead to every sentiment of honour, sensibility and shame, he resolved to indulge them; and through importunity and violence, he in one unguarded moment unhappily effected his detestable purpose; leaving the unhappy fair one he had ruined, to lament the misery and disgrace of her deplorable situation, with fruitless tears and heart-rending anguish.

When Sir John retired, and she had leisure to reflect on the guilt and ignominy of the condition into which she saw herself now plunged, she sunk down upon the floor in an agony of grief, bordering upon despair. At one time she accused her own weakness, at another, the villainous artifices of her base seducer. Having passed a sleepless night, tortured with the keenest remorse, and agony unutterable, she resolved at last, amidst the confusion of thought that agitated and distracted her mind, to write a letter to Sir John Waldgrave, which she immediately did, upbraiding him with his artifices and villainy, and

requiring him to fulfill his often-repeated and solemn engagements to marry her.

Though this letter was no way calculated to produce the intended impression upon the mind of a man like Sir John Waldgrave, he was so conscious of the baseness of his conduct, and at the same time so desirous of her acquiescence in the plan of life which he meant to propose to her; that he wrote her with a studied smoothness and an affected contrition, imputing his trespass to the violence of his love, requesting in his letter her forgiveness; but at the same time professing his dislike of matrimony, and intreating her to leave her country and her friends, and go along with him to Paris, where he doubted not they should live in perfect harmony and happiness; promising in any event, before they set out, to settle on her a handsome annuity, as a security against any event she might dread.

This answer raised her sensibility, pride and indignation to the highest pitch. She wrote him for the last time, in the severest terms which a rankled and distracted mind could dictate; reproaching him with his insolence and perfidy, rejecting his proposal with the most contemptuous disdain, as an audacious insult upon the wretchedness of her situation, and forbidding him ever to see or write her more. Sir John finding it impossible to reconcile Miss Somerville to the plan of living he had projected, set out for France in a few days after he received this letter, in the true spirit of a man of pleasure; with a view to obliterate

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the remembrance of one amour, by the prosecution of others, that chance and a genius for intrigue might throw in his way.

The great difficulty now on the part of Miss Somerville, was to account to her father and brother for the breaking up of the correspondence betwixt her and Sir John, and for his abrupt departure to the continent, without taking leave of her. In the mean time, the melancholy which preyed upon her mind, was easily perceived by them both. In order therefore, to account for this change, she told them, indeed very truly, that, having lately had an interview with Sir John Waldgrave, in which he had too evidently discovered his base and dishonourable intentions, and that having since received from him a letter clearly expressive of those intentions, which in the transport of her rage, she had burnt; she had forbid him ever to see her face, or dare to repeat his detestable proposal. Both her father and brother joined in expressing the strongest indignation at such perfidious and unprincipled conduct; congratulated her upon the escape she had made; bestowed that applause on her spirit and virtue which she could not appropriate to herself, and administered to her every consolation in their power to bestow. After spending a few days longer in London, till Miss Somerville recovered a little strength, she and her father set out together on their journey to Cheshire. Soon after their arrival, Miss Somerville found herself with child, an event, in the situation in which she

was

was placed, the most deplorable that could have happened. The experience of the present, and the anticipation of the future miseries of that situation, preyed incessantly upon her mind, and threw her into an agony beyond conception. Her father observing, with the deepest concern, her health gradually impaired, exerted his utmost assiduity and tenderness, in persuading her to adopt the means he prescribed for her recovery. His solicitude and affection stung her to the heart; and when alone drew floods of tears from her eyes, upon every recollection of his kindness, compared with her own unworthiness. At last, after much hesitation and many a conflict, she determined to discover the fatal secret, which indeed could be no longer concealed, to her brother; who, at her father's earnest desire, had come to see her. The discovery affected him exceedingly. While he glowed with the greatest indignation at the author of her wrongs, he felt more pity than resentment for the unhappy sufferer; but trembled at the apprehension of communicating the melancholy information to her father. In order to avoid this discovery, the Doctor proposed sending her immediately to Bath; but, as her father, from his anxiety and tenderness for his daughter, insisted on accompanying her; it became necessary to drop this scheme, and to communicate to him the direful tidings of her disgrace. The information threw him into an agony which it is impossible to describe. He wrung his hands, and looking up to heaven, implored his Maker

ker to grant him a speedy death, as the only period of his misery. Having sent orders to his daughter, immediately to leave his house, her brother sent her with a confidential servant to a village at the distance of some miles, to the care of a woman who had been her nurse. The fatigue of the journey, however, and the circumstances of her disgrace, brought on her labour somewhat prematurely, and she was in two hours after her arrival at the place of her destination delivered of a girl.

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LETTER XXIX.

THE various emotions of grief, remorse and shame, which agitated the bosom of Miss Somerville, upon the present occasion, produced a fever which endangered her life. As her constitution, however, was naturally good, it enabled her to sustain the shock, though the violence of the disease reduced her to a state of weakness and langour, which, added to the melancholy that preyed upon her mind, threatened to terminate in a decay. The grief and anguish, which the circumstances of her disgrace had occasioned to so affectionate a father, in particular lay heavy on her heart. This grief would probably soon have proved fatal to her, had not her brother, whose sympathy and affection were not yet extinguished by the late instance of her frailty, for which he considered the punishment she had already suffered as a sufficient atonement, prevailed on the now relenting old man to see and forgive a daughter, who was once the delight of his eyes, and the joy of his heart.

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In the mean time, the Doctor, whose indignation at the barbarous and brutal ravisher of his sister, could only be appeased by his death, hearing of his arrival in London, sent him a challenge, conceived in the following terms:—

"*Sir*,

"THE irreparable injury you have with equal perfidy and cruelty done to a once beloved sister, who was the comfort of her father's declining age, and for whose violated honour your blood only can atone, have excited in my mind the justest indignation at the author of her wrongs, and the most ardent desire to avenge them. I expect therefore, you will meet me in Hyde Park, at 4 o'clock on Friday morning, in order to aggravate your guilt by my death, or expiate it by your own. J. SOMERVLILE.

Somerville Hall, Tuesday Morning."

To this letter, sent by express, the Doctor received the answer he desired, next evening.

"*Sir*,

"I received your letter, and shall meet you at the hour and place appointed. I could indeed have wished not to load my conscience by your death, but as you seem determined to fight, I cannot refuse you the opportunity you desire, though, should any thing disastrous happen, you will have your own rashness only to blame. J. WALDGRAVE.

London, Wednesday Morning."

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When Dr Somerville received this letter, he told his father, that he was under the necessity of taking a trip to London, but that he hoped to see him again in a few days; and recommending both him and his sister to the care of a physician in Gloucester, he took an affectionate leave of them, and set out on his journey. Having slept on Thursday night at his own house, he got on horseback next morning, about half an hour after three, attended by Mr Evans, a friend whom he had previously engaged as his second, a surgeon, and a servant. Just as they were riding up to the usual place of rendezvous, they perceived Sir John Waldgrave at a little distance behind them, attended in the same manner. Dr Somerville, having then ordered the servant to retire to some distance, Sir John Waldgrave gave the same orders to his, and the gentlemen came forward to meet each other.

The Doctor then told his antagonist, that though his conduct to his sister was sullied by the foulest stains of treachery and baseness, and was a flagrant violation of his plighted honour, and of the confidence reposed in him, he did not come at present to upbraid him with his crimes, however aggravated; but to fight him, as he considered his death as the only atonement that could be made for such enormous and complicated guilt. Sir John replied, that whatever injury he had done Miss Somerville, he was not of a disposition to be bullied into a reparation of that injury by any of her friends; that he thought it incum-

incumbent upon him to attend Dr Somerville upon the call he had given him; that he was now ready to stake his life against that of his antagonist, and that he left the choice of the weapons with which they were to fight, to him. The Doctor answered, that he had come prepared to fight with sword or pistol, and Sir John might have his option. As neither of them however, seemed inclined to take it, the seconds interfered, and proposed that the affair should be determined by lot, which was mutually agreed to.—Lots having been cast, the right of election fell to the Doctor. Since the choice of weapons has fallen to me, says he, let us fight, if you please, with pistols. With all my heart, replied Sir John; and having given their pistols to their seconds in order to load them, it was agreed, that they should stand back to back, that they should each walk six paces in opposite directions, and that at the moment they had a full front view of each other, they should fire. Every thing having been thus settled, and a mutual promise having been given by their seconds, that whosoever of the two should fall, no prosecution should be carried on against the survivor;—the gentlemen took their ground, and walking slowly and equally the determined distance, they fired, just after they wheeled, at the same instant. The Doctor's ball slightly grazed his antagonist's side, but that of Sir John Waldgrave unhappily passed through the Doctor's breast; and he immediately fell upon the spot. Sir John hastily coming up said, he was sorry for what had

had happened, which he observed, was not of his seeking. The Doctor faintly replied, that he acquitted him of all blame on that account; that he was desirous of avenging his sister's dishonour, the means of effecting which, he thought lawful in this case, if in any; that he sincerely wished Sir John might repent of his crimes, as he earnestly implored the forgiveness of his own; and having in a few feeble ejaculations recommended his soul to God, and his father and sister to the care of his friend, he expired!

Mr Evans, the Doctor's second, beckoning to a coachman whom he had ordered to wait at some distance, to come up, his body was, with the assistance of the surgeons, placed in the coach, and his friend supporting it in his arms, it was carried to his own house. Sir John, his second and servant, rode immediately off the field; and, in order, for some time at least, to avoid the sight of the friends of the deceased, to whom he knew he must be a hateful spectacle, he took a second trip to Paris.

As the reader may be desirous to know the sequel of a life stained by the blackest crimes; let him be informed, that Sir John Waldgrave, having made an assignation with a French Countess, whom he had seduced, was stabbed to death by her husband in her arms, an end worthy of his infamous character, and doubtless ordained by providence, as an exemplary punishment of his aggravated guilt. He was immediately carried off after receiving the fatal blow; and was by his servants committed to the care of a surgeon.

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Having lived two days in great agony, he acknowledged the justice of the present retaliation, and fervently implored the divine forgiveness, upon account of his heinous crimes, and particularly upon account of the atrocious injury he had done to Miss Somerville. He declared, to some friends who attended him, that he now considered her as his wife, and that as he must soon appear before the tribunal of his Judge, he would make her the only reparation at present in his power, by declaring her such, and by transferring to her and her child, ten thousand pounds, which he had in the Bank of England, the only part of his fortune then at his disposal; and his will having been instantly made by an attorney in this manner, he died in a few hours after, overwhelmed with horror, and his body was privately buried in Paris.

Ye libertines of the age, who meditate the ruin of innocence and beauty, say, whether the attainment of the pleasures you pursue with so much eagerness, be not over-balanced by the remorse you must sometimes feel; if all sensibility be not extinguished in your minds, upon account of the disgrace and misery you entail upon the unhappy creatures you have seduced or betrayed, by the mental agony attendant on such a death-bed scene, and by the dread and anticipation of a future retribution!

LETTER XXX.

MR. EVANS, having paid the last duty to his friend, set out as soon as possible for Somerville Hall, in order to prevent a hasty communication of the fatal tidings of Dr Somerville's death. He found the old man, upon his return, still in a state of great weakness, but very considerably cheared and comforted by the hope of his son's return. His daughter too, in a languishing condition, though her father was now reconciled to her, was at this time in the house with her child, which, notwithstanding the circumstances of her disgrace, she hugged and caressed with maternal fondness; and she expected with great eagerness the return of a brother, whose sympathy and kind offices had soothed and comforted her, under her otherwise insupportable distress. In such a trying situation, therefore, it will be easily imagined, that Mr Evans felt himself exceedingly embarrassed, with regard to the communication of the dreadful tale; and it appeared to him the most painful task that could have been imposed on a man of a feeling heart,

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to be obliged to tear up those wounds afresh, which were yet scarce closed since their recent infliction.—But it was a necessary task, especially as that meddling and officious babbler, Rumour, had already dropt some alarming hints of the truth.

In a few hours after Mr Evans' arrival, Mr Somerville leaning over a window, that looked into the garden, unobserved, overheard two of the servants at the foot of the wall, talking with the appearance of much concern of the fate of Dr Somerville; one of them saying to the other, that he was afraid their old master would soon hear the most doleful tidings that ever reached his ear, for, added he, I have been told, that his son is killed in a duel. This information, vague and uncertain as it seemed to be, struck Mr Somerville like a dagger to the heart, and he sunk down immediately on the floor. When he had recovered a little, from the effects of that consternation and terror which had seized him, upon the first accidental report of the death of his son, he called for Mr Evans, who happened to be in an adjoining apartment with Miss Somerville; told him what he had immediately heard, and adjured him to conceal nothing from him of what he knew with regard to the fate of his son. Mr Evans now saw it was in vain to deny or dissemble a fact, of which Mr Somerville had already received an obscure intimation, especially as the accounts of his son's death must at any rate have been soon communicated to him. He therefore judged it best, as his fears were already so

much alarmed, to communicate the whole, which he did with all the tenderness and sympathy of a deeply afflicted friend. " Eternal God," exclaimed the venerable old man, on hearing the dreadful story, " how long shall the shafts of thy vengeance be levelled at this devoted head! O let thy mercy put a period to a life, which is now become insupportable!" The unhappy Miss Somerville, who had followed Mr Evans into the room, on hearing the accounts of her brother's death, fainted away in the arms of a servant who attended her, and was carried in this condition to her bed chamber, Mr Evans accompanying the servant. After laying her on her bed, and applying some cordials for her recovery, she revived, but it was to misery in the extreme. " O! my brother," cried she, " thou best of men, thou kindest of brothers and of friends! Hast thou fallen by the hand of him, who has undone thine unhappy sister! Wretch that I am, to have been the cause of thy death! I shall now become an object of detestation and abhorrence to all, but most of all to myself! This battered frame will, however, I trust, soon fall to pieces, and release its miserable inhabitant! Merciful God, let my sufferings atone for my guilt, and let thy compassion of my misery incline thee speedily to cut asunder the thread of my wretched life!—But, O! my poor father! What will become of my poor father! This reiterated stroke must tear his parental heart, and overwhelm him with grief unutterable! Alas! Alas! his daughter, his wretched daughter has been

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the cause of his accumulated calamities!" A servant having at this moment entered the room, whispered Mr Evans that Mr Somerville was dead. As Miss Somerville, notwithstanding her sufferings, possessed the sense of hearing in the most acute degree, her ear immediately caught the sound, and she exclaimed, "My father dead, did you say," hastily drawing aside the curtain, and eagerly looking at the servant who had given this information; "then I shall soon follow him, and our ashes shall be mingled together in one common grave. His death is the prelude to, and the forerunner of mine, and sounds my funeral knell. I hear the call, and hasten to obey it. My dear father! Thou hast suffered the last pang, and reached the shore of everlasting rest! Why was I not permitted to explore thy dying looks, which perhaps searched in vain for thine absent daughter? Why was I not permitted to smooth for thee, as far as I was able, the bed of death, to seal the forgiveness of mine offences on thy quivering lip; to close thy swimming eyes, and to receive the last benediction from thy faultering tongue! But a short interval shall divide us. Farewell, thou dear and honoured shade, thou best and most affectionate of parents, farewell! We shall soon meet, I trust, to part no more, in the regions of immortal blessedness!" Then turning to Mr Evans, her eyes swimming with tears—"I have only one last request, Sir," said she, "to make of you, with which, if you are so good as to comply, I shall die in peace." Mr Evans assured her, that

he would readily grant, and faithfully fulfill whatever she was pleased to ask. "Then," says she, "give me your hand and your promise, that you will take my helpless infant under your protection and care, and that you will, if she is spared, educate her properly for the station in which she may be placed, and for the part she may be called to act in life. I conjure you, Sir, by the sacred ties of that friendship which you entertained for my beloved brother—I conjure you by the anxiety and concern of a wretched mother, to execute the sacred trust, which with my dying breath I now repose in you." He replied, that the friendship he had for her worthy brother, and the respect which he had for her father and herself, would have determined him to take her child under his care, though he had not pledged his word; that he now considered himself as bound by a double tie, and that she might be assured, he would discharge the trust committed to him to the best of his ability. "May the blessing of an unhappy mother, and of an helpless infant," answered she, "descend upon you," grasping his hand, and bathing it with her tears, "and may a merciful God," lifting up her eyes as she spoke, toward heaven, with the imploring look of ardent supplication, "preserve her from the snares of faithless men, and enable her to obliterate the infamy of her birth, by a conduct more innocent and virtuous than mine!" Her strength being utterly exhausted by the violence of her exertions, and by the earnestness and energy with which she

she spoke; she fell back on her bed, and continued some time motionless. But a delirium coming on with the fever which now raged in her veins, her understanding was bewildered amidst the crowd of ideas which floated in her distempered imagination; and the discriminating power of reason was totally annihilated. Mistaking Mr Evans, who sat on her bedside drowned in tears, for her father, and looking wildly yet earnestly at him, she exclaimed with a voice of inexpressible agony—"Alas! my father, you weep! These tears are shed for your unhappy Emily. The remembrance of her disgrace draws this flood from your eyes. But I have most cause to weep, and the stream shall never cease to flow, till the fountain from which it is derived is dried up for ever. Can you forgive, my dear father, your offending but penitent child? O! restore your wretched daughter, who has wandered from the path of happiness and duty, and now earnestly desires to return to it; restore your once beloved Emily, who will never cease to love and honour you, to your forgiveness and favour!" Exhausted by the fatigue of speaking, and by the exertions she had made beyond her strength, she again sunk down on her bed, and continued for some time quiet, and to appearance inclined to sleep. In a little, however, she was roused from this seemingly torpid state by another paroxysm of the fever, which along with the delirium, continued with a degree of violence, that her enfeebled frame was scarce able to sustain; and which

threatened to put a period to her life. Springing up from her bed, she broke forth into a transport of indignation and rage at the fancied violence of Sir John Waldgrave. "Help, help!" cried she, "will none of you help? Will none of you protect an unhappy maid from the assaults of brutal violence? My father! My brother! haste, haste to rescue me from the grasp of the ruthless ravisher? Thou perjured villain, didst thou not swear eternal love, and pledge thine honour to fulfil thy solemn vows at the altar? Sure, if no hell existed, it must have been created for such a wretch as thee!" Her imagination hurrying her from the idea of the violence offered to herself, to a visionary view of the fatal duel, betwixt her brother and Sir John Waldgrave, upon her account, she exclaimed—"Ah! my dear brother! What desperation has seized thee, to hazard thy life against the ruffian who has ruined thy sister, and who will consummate his crimes by thy murder! Leave, O! leave my cause, I conjure you, to the righteous vengeance of heaven!" Imagining she saw her brother fall, she cried, "Ah! he falls, he falls! Help, Mr Evans, help to support your friend! See! See! He lifts his dying eyes, and casts a last tender look on his wretched sister, as if he would say, I wished to have avenged thy violated honour, but heaven has ordained it otherwise." Overpowered by the violence of her sensations, she once more sunk into a state of apparent insensibility; but the phantasms, which in the disordered state of her mind, so frequently presented

sented themselves to her imagination, now recurred in a more pleasing form. Deluded by the visionary representations of this faculty, she fancied she saw her father and brother, looking down upon her with ineffable tenderness and love, from the seats of bliss, and beckoning her away. Transported with the ravishing vision, she exclaimed, "I come, I come, my ever honoured father and my dearest brother, to rejoin your immortal and happy society! For ever freed from the apprehension of the artifices and violence of Sir John Waldgrave, I fly, ye dear relatives and guardian spirits of the just, to your protecting arms, and to your happy abode!" As she uttered these words, her eyes sparkled with an intelligent ardour, that indicated at once the return of reason and the transport of hope, and casting a look of inexpressible complacency on Mr Evans, she sunk into a gentle swoon, and expired.

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LETTER XXXI.

A Fifth blemish, Ladies, in the female character, of far greater magnitude than the one last mentioned, which justice and truth require, that I should take notice of, is that of a disposition in several married women for gallantry and intrigue—a disposition, which, however agreeable it may render them to their paramours, certainly disqualifies them for being the estimable friends and companions of their husbands.

Is it not, Ladies, a very extraordinary fact, that the frailty so unhappily exemplified in the four preceding Letters—a frailty, which is the effect of weakness, and of a momentary impulse of passion, in an unguarded moment, or of credulity and misplaced confidence in our sex, entails for the most part more ignominy upon the unhappy female, who has perhaps exhibited only one instance of it in her life, than the deliberate and frequent infidelity of several of her sex to the marriage bed. How, it may be naturally asked, shall we account for this unjust appropriation of

of shame and disgrace to two blemishes in the female character, of very different degrees of guilt; the one of which, considered as a frailty, admits of much palliation, as the effect of temptation and surprise; the other, for the most part a deliberate crime, admits of no excuse, and is greatly aggravated by the atrocious injury done to the unsuspecting, perhaps affectionate and indulgent husband, and by the spurious brood introduced into his family, as the heirs to his fortune, and the objects of his love?

This very unfair distribution of censure, may, I think, be derived from the three following causes; from the general depravity of our manners—from infidelity to the marriage bed being too common, and therefore generally stigmatized with less infamy—and from the too easy opportunities of concealing such infidelity. But it is the province of well informed reason, to assign to each frailty and to each vice in the female character, its proportionate degree of censure and blame; and to the vice last mentioned, infidelity to the marriage bed, a higher degree of guilt and infamy ought in justice, upon account of its consequences above-mentioned, to be annexed to those of your sex who commit this crime, than even to those of ours, who discover the same infidelity.

Of the guilt of the disposition to, and of the practice of gallantry in your sex, I will readily confess, that a great part of it may be fairly attributed to ours, to those abandoned libertines who are the tempters and seducers of the unhappy fair ones, whose principles

ciples they have corrupted, whose virtue they have undermined, and whose modesty they have destroyed. But the greater part of the blame resulting from your deviation from the path of rectitude and duty, ought certainly to be imputed to yourselves. I am sorry to observe, that the present system of female education and manners, affords too much scope for the arts of seduction and intrigue, which, when discovered, incur too little punishment, and entail too little ignomity on the unprincipled rakes and libertines who adopt them. Hence it is, that we hear of so many instances of infidelity to the marriage bed in both sexes, which instead of being branded with any peculiar marks of ignominy, subject the man who hath been guilty of the violation, only to a pecuniary mulct, and procure for the woman who hath been unfaithful to her marriage vows, a divorce from the man she hath so greatly injured; while by this means she has it in her power to finish her career of guilt and infamy, by a scandalous cohabitation with her seducer. To such of you, Ladies, as are distinguished by native modesty, and by principles of strict virtue and honour, (and I trust, that there are many among you thus distinguished,) it peculiarly belongs to supply as much as possible the deficiency of the present laws and manners, to correct the enormity of which I am treating, by every mark of contempt and disdain, which you can inflict on the man, who would degrade the dignity of your sex, and ruin your personal reputation, by perfidious attempts on your

virtue

virtue and honour. Let the young and inexperienced part of your sex, therefore, guard with the utmost prudence and caution against the ensnaring arts of their vile betrayers; and let the married Ladies, in particular, resent with becoming scorn and indignation, the first advances to any improper and unbecoming connection with such persons. Remember, Ladies, that you have a most important and sacred trust committed to you, that of being the guardians of your husbands' honour, peace, and happiness.—The sacrificing these, therefore, by the violation of your marriage vows, and by the indulgence of a criminal passion, will, in the estimation of all the wise and worthy part, both of our sex and of your own, entail upon your characters guilt of the greatest magnitude, and infamy of the deepest dye. Such guilt and infamy pursued the imprudent and criminal conduct of the unhappy Lucilia, the subject of the following narrative.

LUCILIA inherited from nature those charms which usually attract the admiration, and captivate the hearts of many individuals of our sex, whom she ensnared in her toils. Elated with the attention shewn, and with the compliments paid her, she seemed to enjoy them as the tribute due to her charms; and the envy of her own sex was amply compensated by the homage which was paid by ours to her personal beauty and accomplishments.

Of all the candidates for her affection, the pretensions of Benevolus, a man of independent fortune, and

and at the same time of real worth, were particularly favoured by her parents; and though Lucilia herself felt little either of the pains or pleasures of love, she was persuaded by her mother to give her hand to Benevolus, in expectation that the kindness of the husband would, after marriage, both excite and ensure the affection of the wife.

Benevolus, after his marriage, exhibited in the whole of his behaviour every proof that could be reasonably desired of affection and indulgence to his beloved Lucilia. The giddiness of her disposition, indeed, and her extravagant passion for admiration, which marriage had not yet subdued in her heart, created him some uneasiness; but as he had no reason as yet to suspect her fidelity, he continued both his fondness and his confidence, resolved to suspect no guilt where he had obtained no proof. The first four years of their matrimonial life passed over their heads in domestic tranquility and happiness; without any suspicion, or ground of suspicion upon the part of Benevolus, of the constancy and affection of his spouse, who had brought him during that time three children, two boys and a girl, on whom the fond father doated with all the ardour of parental love, and which he regarded as the endearing pledges of the affection and fidelity of his wife. But Lucilia, whose charms were yet in their prime, without any premeditated guilt, was stimulated by a rage for conquest, and by that preposterous desire of admiration, which flowing from vanity, one of the strongest passions

sions in the female breast, too frequently breaks forth even in conjugal life. This passion, always strong in the mind of Lucilia, was powerfully excited by the attention and assiduity, and by the artifices and flattery, of the licentious and unprincipled Lothario.

This young libertine, of plausible manners but depraved heart, soon perceived the weakness of Lucilia, and availed himself of it, by addressing himself at once to her vanity and her love. By his compliments, his solicitations, and his intrigues, he at last accomplished his accursed purpose, and persuaded the deluded but guilty Lucilia, to abandon her worthy husband and her promising children, and to repair to France with her perfidious lover. To this fatal step indeed, she at first felt a strong reluctance. Her affection for her children, and her attachment to her seducer, produced upon this occasion a violent struggle in her bosom, which however, was at last overcome by the importunity of Lothario. Dreading a discovery of her guilt, which now began to be suspected, she was prevailed upon to set off with her infamous paramour for Dover, in a post chaise, and in three days arrived in Paris, that great seat of debauchery, dissipation and folly, where she continued sometime lost in the crowd, undiscovered and unknown; solacing herself with the love of her base betrayer, and endeavouring to obliterate the remembrance of her guilt and shame, in his infamous embraces; though the consciousness of that guilt often disturbed her thoughts, and awakened at different intervals a transient but in-

ineffectual remorse in her agitated mind. A circumstance however, soon after occurred, which by abandoning her at once to ignominy and want, and by exciting in her breast a variety of painful sensations, resulting from the consciousness of her baseness, served to render her remorse more poignant and permanent. The inconstant and perfidious Lothario, having engaged in a new intrigue with a French lady, to whom he had procured an introduction, forsook the wretched Lucilia, without compunction or concern, and without making any provision for her future exigencies. Deserted by her profligate lover, and overwhelmed with the weight of poverty, guilt and disgrace, she suffered all that mental anguish which these accumulated miseries tended to produce. For some time she relieved her necessities by the sale of the jewels and trinkets she had brought along with her, and which she had received from Lothario; but that resource began at last to fail her, and she had nothing in prospect before her but infamy and want. She was in this miserable situation, when Benevolus, in consequence of the enquiries and exertions of a friend he had in Paris, discovered the place of her retreat; and after giving orders to that friend to advance her a hundred and fifty pounds to supply her immediate wants, he settled on her one hundred pounds yearly, for life.

This unexpected supply of her necessities, from the man she had so greatly injured, affected her extremely, and inspired her with the warmest gratitude,

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at the same time that the recollection of her infidelity stung her with the most pungent remorse, and covered her with confusion and shame, on every review of her husband's generous kindness, compared with her own unworthiness. After recovering from the violence of her emotions, on receiving the benefaction of her husband, she wrote him a most penitential letter, imploring his forgiveness, and thanking him for his generosity, so undeserved upon her part; and having taken a respectful and affecting leave of his friend, she retired to the obscurity of a convent, where she spent the remainder of her days, endeavouring to hide her shame in the calm retreat of a sequestered life.

LETTER XXXII.

THE last blemish, Ladies, in the female character, on which I propose to animadvert, and which disqualifies you for being the agreeable friends and companions of our sex, is that of a propensity to raise and propagate scandal.

With all the tenderness I feel for a sex, which I so much respect, I am afraid it will be difficult to acquit many individuals of it, of this propensity.—Tea-table scandal, among your sex, is even become proverbial. With some, the detestable practice of propagating scandal, is become so common and so flagrant, that in almost every company they frequent "a reputation dies;" and what at first view appears strange, the disposition to slander among women, is exercised with most severity upon one another. The inclination to propagate scandal upon such unfortunate Ladies, as happen to fall under the lash of female tongues, is most commonly excited by the rivalship of beauty. This quality, more than any other, stirs up envy and malignity in the female breast, and

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it gives birth to many a tale, dextrously contrived for its humiliation and debasement. Even where the character is spared, personal charms are lessened, if not annihilated. The shape and face are scrutinized with a searching eye. One lady it is allowed has a good complexion, but her shape is clumsy, and her features are irregular. Another has regular features, but a sallow complexion. A third possesses symmetry both of figure and features, but her eyes are inanimate, and her countenance is altogether void of expression *.

If any flaw hath appeared in the character, or if any act of imprudence or indiscretion hath been attributed to a reputed beauty, the flaw and the indiscretion are industriously aggravated, or the most injurious hints and innuendos are thrown out, where "more is meant than meets the ear." At other times those retailers of scandal, in order to escape the censure of the more candid and humane part of their species, mention the frailties of some individuals of their sex, with affected pity, and beg they may not

* It may be said, perhaps, that such remarks are perfectly innocent, and indicate no disposition to propagate scandal, which can only affect the moral character, and has no natural blemishes or imperfections for its objects. I readily admit the truth of this observation, when an opinion is delivered upon the outward figure, complexion and expression, without any tincture of malevolence or envy; but if any spark of these baneful passions lie latent in the breast of the female critic, she will be tempted to exercise her perspicacity in the discovery and exaggeration of natural imperfections; and the moral character, if vulnerable, will seldom escape her animadversions, which will naturally be directed both to raise and propagate scandal.

not be repeated by those to whom in confidence they communicate them. In these various ways do tale-bearers scatter fire-brands and death around them; saying, "Are we not in sport?" If, Ladies, you would seriously consider the deplorable, often fatal consequences resulting from scandal and evil speaking, I am confident that the feelings of humanity would restrain you from indulging a practice productive of such unhappy effects.

I am far from intending to insinuate that the disposition to raise and propagate scandal, is a general feature in the character of your sex, though it must be acknowledged, that it is more prevalent in the female sex than in the male; nor do I believe that this disposition, tinctured as it may be in some cases with envy, often proceeds from real malignity, which, I think, is rarely an inmate in the female breast. To what then, it will be asked, is the propensity to scandal, so frequently observable in your sex, to be attributed? I am of opinion, that we may for the most part very justly attribute this propensity to that inclination to talkativeness, which Smellie, in his Philosophy of Natural History, considers as characteristical of your sex.—"Women," says he, "speak much; they ought to speak much; nature compels them to speak much." It must indeed, be acknowledged, that they are under no invincible necessity of speaking evil of one another; but if, as he asserts, they are compelled by nature and necessity to speak, we cannot wonder, that when the conversation happens

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to flag, they should, in order to prevent the irksomeness resulting from absolute silence, revive its dying spirit with a small portion of scandal; and if no other topic occur at the time, the Ladies will at least have Mr Smellie's plea of natural impulse, and inevitable and irresistible necessity to plead in their favour.—When the disposition, however, to censure, is much indulged, the plea of fate and necessity will hardly be admitted by a candid and benevolent mind, as an apology for detraction. The mischievous tendency and usual effects of this propensity in its excess, will appear in a more striking light, by giving you the History of Miss Gossip, with which I shall conclude this part of the present work.

Miss Gossip was an ancient maiden lady of considerable fortune, but of plain appearance, and being of a peevish and acrimonious disposition, which was increased by some disappointments in love, her chief enjoyment after sustaining these disappointments had consisted in blasting the reputation she could not rival, and in frustrating the happiness she could not attain. In the detestable arts of detraction and slander, she was thoroughly versed, and by the most malignant whispers and surmises too commonly accomplished her end. These arts she employed on Honoria, with the most mischievous purpose. Honoria, in addition to those personal charms of which she had no inconsiderable share, possessed a chearfulness and sprightliness of disposition, a frankness of manners and a gaiety of heart, unsuspicious of deceit, that rendered

her a general favourite with our sex, and engaged the particular affection of Cleathes, to whom she was betrothed. The day being fixed for the celebration of their nuptials, Cleathes anticipated with rapture the happy union with his beloved Honoria, and Honoria felt equal pleasure in the prospect of being united to her dear Cleathes. Miss Gossip was the only person of their acquaintance who felt no joy in the contemplation of the proposed match; and her plodding head and wicked heart devised a plan, by which she hoped to prevent its accomplishment.

Aristodemus, the cousin and intimate friend of Cleanthes, having privately married Aspasia, with the knowledge and approbation both of his friend and of Honoria, who were the only witnesses, was solicitous to conceal his marriage from his uncle Cleobulus, lest in consequence of his dissatisfaction with his conduct, he should deprive him of his share of his fortune, which he had resolved to divide equally betwixt him and Cleanthes. As the old gentleman was in a rapid decline, and the situation of Aspasia, who had brought her husband a son, was at the present juncture peculiarly critical, Aristodemus applied both to Cleanthes and Honoria, to assist him in concealing from the knowledge, and even suspicions of Cleobulus, a secret, which might be so prejudicial to him in its consequences. Strongly as they both were attached to Aristodemus and Aspasia, they readily promised their joint aid in the concealment of their marriage, and of the birth of their son.

Cleanthes,

Cleanthes having engaged a discreet woman in the neighbourhood, on whose fidelity he could depend, to nurse the child, Honoria herself carried it in the dusk of the evening to her house. While she was on her way, she was unfortunately discovered by Miss Gossip, at a little distance, who hearing the child cry, followed unperceived, and returned home well pleased with the discovery she had made. Next day she wrote an anonymous letter to Cleanthes, in which, pretending a concern for his honour, she informed him of this discovery, and another of the same kind to Cleobulus, acquainting him of the disgrace Honoria had brought upon herself, and was about to entail upon his nephew, of which he might be satisfied by his enquiries at the house, where her child was put out to nurse. Cleanthes, very fortunately, happened to be at his uncle's house, at the instant this letter was sent; and as Cleobulus was supposed at that time to be at the point of death, it was not opened by Cleanthes, till after his decease, when he read its contents with equal surprise and indignation, though he was yet a stranger to its author. Having shewn this letter, however, as well as the one addressed to himself, to Aristodemus, he immediately recognized the hand of Miss Gossip; to whom Cleanthes, after the interment of Cleobulus, and his marriage with Honoria, sent the following letter.

" *Madam,*

" Of your malevolent intentions toward me, and

the lady to whom I am now so happily married, (and whose character, thank God, is a perfect contrast to your own,) your anonymous letters to me, and to my late uncle, have afforded sufficient evidence. As from the spirit with which these letters are written, and from the handwriting itself, the author is easily to be traced; I shall take care, in order to prevent the effects of your future calumnies, that your character shall be represented in its proper light, for the instruction of all calumniators, not doubting, that it will be contemplated with the detestation it deserves.

"CLEANTHES."

When Miss Gossip received this letter, unable to bear the eye of public indignation, she set out immediately on her travels for the continent.

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LETTER XXXIII.

HAVING pointed out, and exemplified, in some preceding Letters, what seem to me to be the most remarkable vices and weaknesses in the female character, which disqualify those women in whom they exist, for being either valuable or agreeable friends and companions to our sex; I shall, in some following Letters, Ladies, proceed to a more agreeable part of my subject, by considering what are those talents and dispositions, which can render you, in the strictest sense, the estimable and endearing companions of the worthiest and most accomplished part of mankind, in the more civilized periods of society—talents and dispositions, which many of you certainly possess, and to the attainment of which you ought all to aspire.

The first qualities that I shall mention, as affording the surest foundation for that friendship betwixt the sexes, for which they were originally designed, are an affection toward those favoured individuals of

our

our sex, who are the proper objects of it; fidelity in your attachments both to your lovers and friends, and a well placed confidence in them. This affection is natural, all-powerful and universal. We have indeed, heard of men haters in your sex, and of women haters in ours; but the character of either is unnatural; and if it exist at all, its existence must be owing to a disappointment in love, and to a general prejudice against the sex, contracted in consequence of that disappointment. The affection, my amiable friends, of which I treat, is deeply implanted in your nature, and interwoven with your very being; and you cannot extirpate it if you would, nor need you blush to avow it. Shame and ignominy be the lot of the man who is capable of abusing, or of exciting this passion by unfair means, and of disappointing the passion he excites. May he, by a similar disappointment, smart under an equal wound, and feel the pain he inflicts!

Affection sprouts forth for the most part very early and remarkably, in the minds of young persons of both sexes, towards each other; and as it is well or ill directed, kept under due regulation and restraint, or suffered to shoot forth in all its wild luxuriance and excess, becomes the source of the greatest happiness or misery in their lives. Love may be regarded as that powerful magnet, which attracts congenial souls with irresistible force towards each other; and when the affections of such are well founded and judiciously cherished, they often terminate, at a more advanced

ced age, in that ardent and unalterable friendship, which constitutes their mutual happiness.

It is however, a matter of great importance to your tranquillity, to watch over the first emotions of love that arise in your hearts, and to take care, that this ardent and often too violent passion be not fixed on improper objects. If this pleasing, and when unsuccessful, tormenting passion, be allowed to gather strength, it will be exceedingly difficult to subdue it, and the rooting it out will be like cutting off a right hand, or plucking out a right eye.

Fidelity is another quality, which, in your intercourse with your male companions and friends, is necessary on both sides to constitute true friendship; and in this quality few of you, it is to be hoped, are deficient. Your sex have, indeed, been suspected by some of ours, of being more faithful to us than to one another, a circumstance, for which I shall afterwards endeavour to account, and which certainly ought to excite both our affection and gratitude.

The last quality that I mentioned, as necessary to render you the friends and companions of man, is a *well placed* confidence in our sex. This is an indispensible requisite in your friendship with us. But, in your connections with our sex, your confidence should be very cautiously and warily bestowed, till you are thoroughly acquainted with the character of the persons in whom you confide. To this confidence you have indeed a strong propensity, both from the general disposition of your nature, and from your in-

considering us as the natural protectors and guardians of your innocence and honour. It is, I acknowledge, a disposition upon your part of the most generous kind; and the abuse of it upon ours, constitutes a crime marked by the greatest ignominy, and by the basest perfidy.

The qualities however, above-mentioned, which I have considered as necessary to render you the agreeable and estimable friends and companions of man, are most signally displayed, and most safely indulged in the matrimonial state, to which you are destined; and they contribute greatly to consummate the happiness of that state. Let us attend both to their separate and combined influence in connubial life.

Mutual affection, which in young persons of both sexes in single life, should be watched with such jealousy, and indulged with such caution, ought in the matrimonial state to be cherished with unbounded ardour, and indulged without controul. In the former state, this affection is subjected to the salutary restraints of prudence; in the latter, it is subjected to no restraint whatever; and its gratifications and exercise constitute on both sides the very essence of matrimonial duty and matrimonial felicity. This affection, cherished and encreased by the constant reciprocations of tenderness and love betwixt married persons, ripens into a warm and permanent friendship, which by mutual sympathy and participation, enables them to withstand the storms of adversity and affliction; a friendship which death itself cannot dissolve; but which, kindled up and glowing with a generous

nerous ardour in the present life, will, in a future, burn with a purer and brighter flame through the successive ages of eternity.

For the fidelity of their engagements to each other in the matrimonial state, their mutual affection is the best and surest pledge. If the affections of married persons be ardent and unalterable toward one another, there will be no hazard of either failing in fidelity to the other, in deed or in thought; and such fidelity will become a firm cement of their mutual friendship.

I mentioned confidence in one another, as the last ingredient in real friendship, and as necessary to render you the estimable friends and companions of our sex, especially in conjugal life. In the single state, this disposition is the natural effect of mutual love in young persons of both sexes, especially in the sweet and various intercourse of a successful courtship, where hope is sanguine, and affection is ardent; before their inexperienced minds are infected with suspicion, or their ingenuous hearts are corrupted by their commerce with the world.

I will not indeed assert, that the qualities abovementioned, of affection, fidelity, and confidence in our sex, are necessarily productive of, and invariably terminate in real friendship, betwixt young persons of equal, or nearly equal ages, strongly attached to one another; because friendship commonly is not so much the object of such persons, as the gratification of love; but I will maintain, that their united

influence

influence lays the best foundation for sincere and steady friendship in the matrimonial state.

Let us advert to their combined influence in that state. The constant reciprocations of kind and friendly offices betwixt persons thus connected, who are possessed of the qualities above-mentioned, tend to increase that affection from which these offices proceed; an affection, which propagated from breast to breast, glows with redoubled ardour, secures their mutual fidelity, is productive of unbounded confidence in one another, and terminates in that intimate and indissoluble friendship, which is at once the basis and perfection of matrimonial felicity. Possessed of these qualities, and of the others to be delineated and exemplified in the following Letters, you will become, Ladies, in the highest degree the respectable and amiable friends and companions of man, and will realize the happiness so exquisitely described by the admirable Poet of the Seasons.

> But happy they, the happiest of their kind,
> Whom gentler stars unite; and in one lot
> Their fate, their fortunes, and their beings blend.
> 'Tis not the coarser tie of human laws,
> Unnatural oft, and foreign to the mind,
> That binds their peace, but harmony itself,
> Attuning all their passions into love.

LETTER XXXIV.

THE next quality, Ladies, that I would mention, as necessary to render you the truly respectable and valuable friends and companions of man, is that of pious affections.

Of all the dispositions that constitute a truly amiable woman, this is the most essential and important. A superlative veneration and love of the supreme Being, the fountain of perfection and of happiness, is unquestionably the first and principal duty of both sexes, and their susceptibility of these affections their greatest glory; but there are certain dispositions in the female mind, which peculiarly prompt and inspire religious sentiments and affections, and promote religious practice, to which it concerns us to attend. That vivacity of imagination, and that sensibility of disposition, by which many of your sex are remarkably distinguished, qualify you in an especial manner, for feeling the transports, and relishing the pleasures of genuine devotion. I observed, indeed, in a former part of this work, that several of your sex, by giving

giving way to the eccentricities of an unbridled imagination upon religious subjects, had acquired the character of enthusiasts and devotees. A sound judgment, however, matured by reflection, wherever it is bestowed, will effectually correct this excess.—When religious sentiments and feelings are subjected to the test of reason, every wild and fanciful idea is discarded, the justest notions of the benignity and beneficence of the deity are adopted; and the most ardent and devout affections toward him are excited in the pious and grateful mind. I know not, whether or not you will accuse me, of indulging a fanciful disposition upon this subject; but I have always been of opinion, that the fervour of the devotional affections, fixed upon the author of all good, beaming in the eye, and glowing in the countenance of an amiable woman, gives a lustre to her charms, and a dignity to her demeanour, which, united with the other graces and accomplishments of the female character, must render her dominion over the human heart equally pleasing and powerful. These pious affections, which impart such attractive charms to your personal beauty, are at the same time the source of the most tranquil, delicious, and ennobling pleasures of human life. Their frequent and habitual exercise, will serve to employ, in a manner equally rational and agreeable, your vacant, and cheer your solitary hours, they will relieve you from that languor and weariness, occasioned by the unceasing round of insipid and unvaried amusements, and they will refine and dignify

dignify your enjoyments, rendering them perfectly pure, exquisite, and permanent. These pious affections, glowing with ardour in the female mind, in the matrimonial state in particular, not only prove the surest foundation of exalted and indissoluble friendship, betwixt persons of a congenial disposition united in that state, but serve to kindle and to communicate mutually to each other, those sublime fervours of devotion, which denote the religious character, and may be regarded as a kind of anticipation of the joys of heaven.

Another eminent advantage resulting from the cultivation and exercise of the devout affections, consists in the serenity, resignation and fortitude, which they serve to inspire in the trying scenes, and in the various and eventful vicissitudes of the human lot.—It is in these interesting and affecting conjunctures, that their signal efficacy in inspiring consolation, and in bearing up the mind under calamities otherwise insupportable, is transcendently conspicuous.

LETTER XXXIV.

A Third quality, Ladies, necessary to render you the agreeable and estimable friends and companions of our sex, is Good Sense, united with œconomy.

The good qualities of the heart will, indeed, conciliate our affection, and even a certain degree of our esteem, for the person in whose character they are discernible; but the qualities of the head and heart must be united, in order to secure both in the highest degree. That intellectual quality, which we distinguish by the name of good sense, and which is nothing else than the capability of thinking justly and rationally on every subject, upon which the mind is employed, and at the same time of acting judiciously in the general conduct of life, is certainly an attainment of high concern to both sexes; and is particularly necessary to render you rational companions in the married state; but this combination is not often attained in a very high degree, and a character may in many respects be amiable and even estimable, in either sex, in which several errors and eccentricities are

are discoverable, both in sentiment and in conduct. There are, likewise, certain modes of thinking and acting, observable in some individuals of our sex, which distinguish them from the generality of mankind, proceeding not from an inferiority of understanding, but from the peculiarity of their mental constitution, and from early acquired habits, which give a wrong bias to their judgment, and influence their general behaviour through life. Hence many respectable individuals, differing in their sentiments and behaviour from the established maxims and modes of common life, expose themselves to the ridicule of the invidious and malignant. In order to avoid that ridicule, therefore, which is the invariable effect of a deviation from established maxims and manners, it is of much more importance than is generally imagined, to conform to those manners in matters of an indifferent nature, or of inferior moment; and in this conformity good sense is manifestly displayed. Deviations from established maxims and manners, occur indeed, more frequently in the male, than in the female character. Your more circumscribed plan of education, and your propensities and habits, in consequence of that plan, combined with the more restricted society with which you are conversant, give a more uniform colour to your lives; which for the most part admit not of that discrimination of character, and of that variety of sentiment and passion, which are observable in our sex. Yet the reveries of a romantic and distempered imagination, some-

times occupy and absorb the female mind, to such a degree as to produce that irregularity of thinking and acting, which leads to a disregard and neglect of the duties of ordinary life.

The disregard and neglect of these duties are occasioned by the want of that common sense and œconomy, which are indispensibly requisite to the proper management of household affairs; and therefore, we may justly include these qualities as essential ingredients in the character of an estimable woman, whose chief object doubtless ought to be to manage family affairs with discretion, not to sparkle and shine in company. In fact, œconomy, though a quality of humble pretensions, is one of great importance to the ease, credit, and comfort of matrimonial life; and may in a great measure be said to be the parent of generosity itself. The want of the quality of which I am treating, is a radical defect in the female character; and the woman who is destitute of it, is utterly unfit for the discharge of those domestic duties, which are clearly pointed out to her by the constitution of her nature, and which, by the destiny of providence, are allotted to her as her peculiar province. Œconomy, indeed, in the management of family affairs, is nothing more than the regular and habitual application of the dictates of common sense to the business of common life. Young girls, therefore, ought to be instructed by their mothers in the knowledge, and habituated to the practice of a decent, not a sordid œconomy in family expences, as essentially neces-

sary

sary to prevent that embarrassment in the circumstances of their husbands, which arises from the want of it. As Belinda exhibited a striking example of the neglect of the quality I am recommending, and of the want of that attention and common sense which occasioned it, I shall conclude this Letter, with a short sketch of her history and character.

BELINDA was the daughter of a wealthy merchant in Liverpool, who having retired from trade, purchased a considerable estate in the neighbourhood of the metropolis, where he lived in great hospitality, during the summer and autumnal months, repairing to town in winter, in order to enjoy the society and amusements it affords to the gay and opulent. Having several sons, and only one daughter, the subject of this little history, he gave her a very liberal education, in the various branches of fashionable instruction, in which her natural talents enabled her to make great proficiency; but as a very handsome fortune was destined for her, by the partiality and fondness of an indulgent father, very little pains had been bestowed by her mother, in initiating her in the knowledge, or habituating her to the practice of œconomy, from an erroneous opinion, that when she came to be mistress of her own house, she might safely devolve the management of family affairs upon a house-keeper.

Belinda had no passion either for gaming, or for the usual routine of the pleasures of a town life. On the contrary, she had a taste for reading, which pre-

vented her from being immerged in the vortex of fashionable dissipation; but her studies were of a peculiar kind, more calculated to amuse the fancy, than to inform the understanding, being confined to plays and novels, which inspired that visionary and romantic turn of mind, that gave her a distaste, and indeed incapacitated her for, the duties of common life, which appeared insipid to her high seasoned imagination. When she was in the country, these productions, in the selection of which she was not over nice, were the food and delight of her mind. She often sat alone on the bank of a murmuring rivulet, or under the shade of a spreading oak, reading with avidity, and ruminating with pleasure on the accomplishments and adventures of her favourite heroes and heroines, rarely, if ever exemplified in real life. In company, her mind was often abstracted; and she took very little share in the conversation, except when some of the company happened to be of a turn of mind congenial to her own.

Among the numerous visitors who frequented the house of her father Opulentus, (for that was his name,) Modestus was peculiarly distinguished, by his independent fortune, sound sense, and acknowledged worth. Captivated by the beauty of Belinda's external form, and prepossessed with an opinion of the goodness of her heart, in which he was not deceived, he paid his addresses to her with an ardour, which, where there is no absolute reluctance upon the part of the lady, for the most part proves successful. As his

his suit was seconded by the wishes and persuasion of her parents, Belinda gave her consent to a match with a man of solid sense and real virtue, though not possessed of the more dazzling, but less valuable accomplishments of the heroes of romance. She could not indeed, help esteeming the character of Modestus; but her visionary and extravagant imagination, nourished by a description of scenes and adventures that never existed, but in her own brain, or in that of her favourite authors, prevented her from holding it in that high estimation, which its acknowledged worth deserved. Modestus, with all his partiality in favour of Belinda, soon perceived her total unfitness for the discharge of domestic duties, which he was obliged to allot to a house-keeper; and while the good dispositions of her heart engaged his affection, he lamented her want of attention and œconomy, and her deficiency in that solid and useful sense, which qualifies a woman for the discharge of the duties of her proper sphere, in the unostentatious and humble walks of private life.

LETTER XXXV.

HAVING shewn the effects of the want of that solid good sense, necessary for the management of the affairs of common life, in the History of Belinda, related in the preceding Letter, I shall, in order to shew the effects of good sense, operating steadily and uniformly, in the general conduct both of single and married life, exhibit in this Letter, by way of contrast, the History of Melissa.

MELISSA was the daughter of a gentleman, who possessed an office under Government, with a salary of two hundred pounds a year. Though he made shift, with strict œconomy, to maintain his family on this moderate income, he found it impossible to make any provision for his children after his death, which unfortunately happened before the education of any one of them was completed, except Melissa's alone. To aggravate the distress of this fatherless family, the disconsolate widow, a woman of singular discretion and exemplary piety, expired in less than a year after the death of her husband, leaving a family of eight

eight children, four boys and four girls, upon the care and protection of providence.

Melissa, the eldest of the family, as yet only in the twentieth year of her age, deeply affected by this reiterated stroke, which deprived her of her only remaining parent, was for some time incapable of forming any plan, either for the education or subsistence of her brothers and sisters. As she was possessed, however, of excellent sense, of great fortitude of mind, and of indefatigable activity, in every kind of business in which she engaged, she summoned up all her mental powers to her aid; and finding herself left at the head of an orphan family, to whom she was strongly attached, and who under providence depended upon her for their present support, and future education; she determined to make every exertion in her power for the accomplishment of these important ends. Having herself been bred to the business of a milliner, by which she had cleared about two hundred pounds before her mother's death, she determined to prosecute the same busines with redoubled ardour. With this view, she laid out her little stock in the purchase of such goods as suited her occupation; having disposed of the effects and most of the furniture that remained after her mother's decease, by the sale of which, she made up the sum of three hundred pounds. This sum, she settled upon proper security, reserving to herself the power of employing a part, or the whole of it, if necessary, in educating the other children, and settling

tling them in business, as exigencies might require; but determined to risk no part of what she considered as the property of her brothers and sisters, in extending her trade; for which, she thought her own funds would be sufficient. Having taken a small house in Bath, that great infirmary of the nation, and that mart of folly and of pleasure, she gradually obtained by her industry and assiduity, strengthened by the plea of a numerous family, depending upon her for their support, a great number of customers of the first rank; and from the profits of her trade, she was able, after defraying the expence of house-keeping, to add a hundred and fifty pounds the first year to her original stock.

As she found the number of her customers, and the profits of her trade daily increasing, she resolved to let the money arising from the sale of her father's effects, accumulate for the benefit of her brothers and sisters; and she not only maintained, but educated them all, upon her own expence. Having obtained from a generous friend and patron, the promise of a considerable living in the church, to her eldest brother, she gave him a more liberal education than any of the others, and directed his education in that particular channel, which was more immediately connected with his profession. The second, she got settled as a clerk, to a banking company in London. The third, she sent to the West Indies, to the care of a relation, who promised to provide for him; and the fourth, she bound apprentice to an attorney in Bath.

Not-

Notwithstanding the very considerable sums expended by Melissa, in the education of her brothers and sisters, particularly in fitting out the former for their several professions and employments, she found herself, at the end of six years after her mother's death, in consequence of the still increasing extent of her trade, in possession of twelve hundred pounds. At this period, a revolution happened in the fate and fortunes of Melissa, in consequence of an acquaintance she had contracted with a young gentleman of the name of Eugenio, of whose character and situation it will be necessary to give some account.

Eugenio was the only son of a physician of considerable reputation in Bristol, who at his death, left him eight thousand pounds, which he secured in the stocks. As Eugenio was blessed with good natural talents, and had received a very liberal education from his father, who had bred him to no particular profession, he resolved to purchase a small estate in the neighbourhood, and there, enjoying the society of a few select friends, without encumbering himself with business of any kind, to devote his time and talents to the more agreeable employments of a studious and literary life. He soon heard, that a small estate of three hundred pounds a year, with a commodious mansion house, was to be sold in the neighbourhood of Bristol; and as the place and its neighbourhood suited his taste, and the rent his fortune, he concluded a bargain with the proprietor, for seven thousand pounds, and expended the remaining

maining thousand in stocking a farm, which he was advised, both for conveniency and advantage, to retain in his own possession.

As Eugenio had spent the whole of his life in a town, and had read books more than men, he soon perceived, that the knowledge he had derived from this source, was of very little use in the occupation in which he had engaged; and could ill supply the want of experience, activity and attention, so indispensibly necessary, in order to render the management of a farm conducive to the advantage of the proprietor. Having been accustomed in his father's house to all the accommodations and comforts of life, without the trouble of exertion, or even of thought to procure them, in consequence of the prudent œconomy of his mother, who unfortunately died a few months before her husband; he had no idea of the care and attention that would now be necessary, for the acquisition of the same advantages. Being himself possessed of great integrity of heart, and having no experience of the arts of chicanery and deceit, so generally practised in the world, he became an easy prey to the artifices of the dishonest and the cunning, who hoped to profit by his inexperience. Without any extravagant expence, therefore, in house-keeping, he was, by the frauds of tradesmen, and by the dishonesty and waste of servants, reduced in a few years to the very brink of ruin; having contracted debt to the extent of four thousand pounds, for which he was obliged to give security on his estate, once more

more upon the point of being sold. As he had taken his resolution with regard to its sale, he resolved to settle the reversion upon the best security he could obtain; and in order to retrieve a part of his fortune by saving, to board himself, humiliating as the scheme was to his pride, for some time in a country village.

While he was meditating this plan, which indeed, the embarrassed situation of his affairs rendered it necessary for him to adopt, he had the pleasure of an accidental interview with Melissa, at the house of a friend, whom he visited at Bath. The elegance of her shape, the symmetry of her features, and the vivacity and spirit of her conversation, made an impression upon the heart of Eugenio, which he had nev r before experienced. He therefore, earnestly wished to embrace every opportunity of cultivating an acquaintance with her, and of fanning that flame which she had already kindled in his bosom. Perceiving, that an union of hearts and interests, with Melissa, was essential to his happiness, he ventured to disclose his passion to her, and to solicit her hand in marriage, with a diffidence indeed, which his unfortunate situation contributed to increase, but with an ardour at the same time, which indicated his earnest wishes to obtain her consent. The respectful, but ardent solicitations of Eugenio, melted the yielding heart of Melissa, and kindled an equal flame in her sympathetic breast. After making a prudent enquiry into the situation of his affairs, which by her activity and œconomy, she thought she would be able to retrieve,

trieve, she agreed to favour the suit of Eugenio, and their nuptial rites were soon after solemnized to their mutual happiness.

Melissa, notwithstanding her marriage, resolved to continue in the business in which she had been so successful, till she relieved Eugenio from his incumbrances. With this view, she took her sisters, whom she was desirous of leaving independent, into partnership with her in trade, and allowed them the half of the profits, retiring herself with Eugenio to the country.

The first thing she did after her retreat, was to dismiss those dishonest and unfaithful servants, who had abused the confidence, and taken the advantage of the inexperience of their master. Having, upon proper recommendations, engaged others, whom, however, she resolved not to trust, till she had thoroughly proved them; she not only defrayed all the expence of the farm by her activity and good management, but maintained and educated the rising family, with which Eugenio and she were blessed, from its produce. Her original stock, the profits of her trade, and the remaining rents of the estate, after paying the interest of the borrowed money, she applied toward discharging his debts, which she effected in the course of ten years; leaving her husband an unincumbered, and by taking the several farms, the leases of which were expired, into her own management, an improved fortune of eight hundred pounds a year.

As

As Eugenio was now at ease in his mind, and in his circumstances, and was relieved from the hurry and perplexity of business, by the activity and good management of his wife, he spent his time chiefly in study, and in conversation with a few chosen friends; and though Melissa's soul never strayed

"Far as the starry zone or milky way,"

she took part often in their conversation, which she enlivened by her sprightliness. But the distinguishing praise of Melissa consisted in her good sense and intellectual ability, exerted in the scenes of domestic life, and in that uncommon activity and œconomy, which, while they enabled her to perform a variety of beneficent actions, retrieved her husband's fortune; and combined with the former qualities, exhibited an example of distinguished excellence in the female character; an example, which challenged the veneration of her children, and the respect and imitation of all her acquaintance.

LETTER XXXVI.

A FOURTH quality, Ladies, necessary to render you agreeable friends and companions to our sex, is Sensibility, under the direction of sound judgement.

Sensibility is a quality of a very popular nature, to which many of your sex make very strong pretensions, but which is by no means so generally possessed as is commonly imagined. True Sensibility is the amiable daughter of Benevolence and Sympathy; and what will appear a paradox both to the men and women of the world, is in many instances as much affected by the distresses of others, as by her own.

It hath often been to many a matter of doubt and discussion, whether very acute sensibility be attended with most advantages or disadvantages; and whether it is really a source of greater happiness or misery to those who are possessed of it. I shall not enter upon the consideration of this question at present, but shall only observe, that as there are very different proportions of those ingredients mingled in the

the cup of different individuals of the human race, whether sensibility be upon the whole really advantageous or disadvantageous, will depend upon the number and nature of the particular ingredients infused into their cup; in other words, of the preponderance of happiness or misery in their peculiar lot. At any rate it must be allowed, that sensibility is, in the matrimonial state, highly beneficial and desirable, upon account of its signal efficacy in heightning the pleasures, and mitigating the sorrows incidental to either of the parties in that state, in the most exquisite degree, by sympathy and participation.

The sensibility indeed of most men, and women too, is of a very selfish nature. They feel very acutely for themselves, but very slightly for others. Their own individual sufferings they dwell upon and aggravate, introduce the subject in every company, and harangue upon it with great emphasis and eloquence, to the no small weariness and disgust of the hearers; but they hear and see the sufferings of others with wonderful apathy, and like the Levite in the parable, *pass by on the other side*. Of this class is Misella, a lady possessed of a very handsome fortune, and at the same time endued with such exquisite sensibility, as neither to be able to see or hear of human wretchedness. If the lame, the blind, or the diseased, are unfortunately exhibited to her view, she instantly turns away with averted eye from the shocking spectacle, which from the extreme irritability of her nerves she is utterly unable to bear, and

reprobates the police of the country, which would allow such miserable objects to wander about begging their bread, to the great annoyance of people of feeling. Accordingly, Misella herself turns a deaf ear to the plaint of distress, and shutting her purse as well as ears, dismisses the miserable objects, with a cold recommendation of them to the funds of the parish.

Genuine sensibility can never be indifferent to any of the multifarious species of human misery ; but it is individual woe, whether real or fictitious, strongly exhibited, and affectingly displayed, not general calamity, which arrests its attentive ear, and draws the lucid drop from its humid eye. Of this exquisite sensibility, which penetrates and melts the human heart, the amiable Alicia Tell afforded an interesting example.

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LETTER XXXVII.

ALICIA TELL was the daughter of Peter, and the descendant of the celebrated William Tell, who excited his countrymen to a strenuous opposition of Austrian tyranny, and rescued Switzerland from the thraldom of the Austrian yoke. Alicia inherited a considerable share of the patriotism of her illustrious progenitors, and possessed at the same time a large portion of that delicate and affecting sensibility which is so enchanting a feature in the female character. Her father and brother having taken up arms, and joined their compatriots in defence of the liberties of their country, against the late unjust aggression of the inhuman French conquerors, were obliged, after that unfortunate battle which proved fatal to the independence of Switzerland, to seek an asylum in the province of Neufchatel, where they had some relations, and whither they fled in disguise, along with Alicia and her friend Isabella, accompanied by two servants and a gentleman of Spanish extraction, named Andero.

While Alicia, her father, brother, and Isabella, were prosecuting their journey towards the place of their destination, along with Andero, to whom Isabella was betrothed, Peter Tell proposed, that in order to prevent suspicion from their travelling in a body, they should part company; that Andero and Isabella, attended by one of the servants, should take one road, while he, his son and daughter, attended by the other servant, should take a different one, to Arberg, where he had some relations, and from whence they could proceed together with greater safety towards Neufchatel. Having thus separated by mutual consent, they had scarce travelled an hour after their separation, when Alicia and her brother heard some voices at a little distance singing a French song, from which they concluded that a party of the enemy was near them. As they had not yet however seen them, they struck immediately into a wood along the side of the road, and having penetrated a little farther into the thickest part of it, they found a cave, where they and their father resolved to conceal themselves, till they could venture to leave it without danger. Alicia, however, safe as she had reason to think herself in this retreat, felt great anxiety for the safety of her friend Isabella; she proposed therefore to her father and brother, that as the French party had now passed them, they should leave the cave, pursue the road taken by Andero and Isabella, and endeavour to come up with them, that they might concert the route most proper for

for them to take, in order to avoid any danger of being intercepted by the enemy. Her father strenuously opposed this proposal as unsafe, and urged her to suspend her anxiety for her friend, and to continue in the cave for that day, setting out in the night by a private path which was perfectly known to him for Arberg, where, he hoped, they should find their friends in safety. Such, however, was Alicia's anxiety to obtain information of Isabella, that she prevailed with her father to change this prudent resolution, and to set out immediately with as much caution and circumspection as possible, in quest of her friend. They had scarce travelled two hours in the direction taken by Andero and Isabella, when, to their consternation and horror, they met another party of French marauders, who had fallen in with their friends on their way to Arberg, and taken them, with some others of their countrymen, into custody, and who, surrounding Alicia, her father, brother, and servant, took them likewise prisoners. The captain of the band, whose name was Riveau, struck with the charms of the ladies, whom he had now, as he imagined, entirely in his power, gave orders to conduct them and their attendants to a neighbouring village, where he intended they should lodge that night. The reader will easily conceive the grief and dismay with which Alicia, her father, brother, Andero and Isabella were overwhelmed, at this sudden and unhappy revolution in their situation; but the interposition of Providence saved the honour of

the ladies, and procured the release of their friends.

Riveau having rode forward to the village, in order to provide proper accommodation for the party, the charge of the ladies and gentlemen was committed to a lieutenant, whose name was Lesobre. As this man was of Swiss extraction, and at the same time bore his captain a grudge, he resolved to exert his utmost endeavours for the liberation of the prisoners. With this view, he caused a part of his detachment to march a little distance before, and the remainder at a little distance behind, while he suggested to Andero and his associates a plan for their deliverance. Having, from his knowledge of the character of Riveau, been well assured of his detestable purpose, he informed them, that if he failed to seduce the Ladies to a compliance with his wishes, he was confident that he would with unfeeling brutality subject them successively to violation; in order to prevent which enormity, he proposed to arm the gentlemen and their servants, and to give each of the ladies a poniard, which they might conceal under their upper robe, that if any attempt were made upon the chastity of either of them by Riveau, they might revenge it by his immediate death. He told the gentlemen, he would remove the guard from the disarmed Swiss, whose leader, a faithful partizan, he would make acquainted with the plot, and whom he would order, upon a concerted signal, to rush with his countrymen into the different houses where the French soldiers were lodged, while they were asleep,

and

and after having seized their arms, to assemble his party at the place appointed, and obey his commands. He added, that he had reason to suspect, from Riveau's looks and behaviour, that he meditated the dishonour of Isabella in the first place, and therefore advised her and her friends, to be on their guard against what might happen, promising them his aid on the impending occasion, and intimating at the same time, his intention of accompanying them to Neufchatel, after conducting the disarmed French soldiers, under the guard of the Swiss, to the borders of that province. Both the gentlemen and the Ladies, having expressed their warmest gratitude to Lesobre, for his advice and proffered assistance in their release; the latter acccepted, with trembling, the arms which he had concealed under his coat, and all of them promised to act the several parts assigned them.

In the mean time, Riveau, having secured quarters for himself and his party, met the Ladies, and conducted each of them to a separate apartment, having committed Peter Tell, his son, and Andero, to the charge of a centinel, who was enjoined to keep them in close custody. He then retired to his own bedchamber, which was near to that of Isabella; and leaving it about midnight, stole softly to the door of that lady's chamber, which he found locked and barred against him. Suspicious, however, of her taking this precaution, he had provided himself with an iron crow, by means of which, he forced both the lock

and bolt that opposed his entrance. When Isabella perceived the door broken up, she dropped the poniard in the sudden fright with which she was seized, and uttering a wild scream of terror, Andero, upon hearing it, rushed upon the centinel, whom he disarmed; and bursting into the room with his drawn dagger, Riveau instantly snatched the poniard that had dropped from the hand of Isabella, and aiming a thrust at his antagonist, which he dextrously parried, Andero plunged his dagger into his bosom, and laid him dead at his feet. The noise occasioned by this rencounter was a signal to Lesobre and the Swiss, who hastily entered the different houses of the village, where the French soldiers slept; and seizing their arms, Lesobre obliged the disarmed French to march under escort of the Swiss, to the borders of Neufchatel, which they reached next evening; when dismissing their prisoners, they entered the town in triumph. This happy company, having now rejoined their friends, transported with joy at their arrival, Lesobre was introduced to them all, with the liveliest gratitude, and welcomed as the protector and deliverer of the Ladies. In a few weeks after, Andero and Isabella were to their inexpressible joy united in the bonds of marriage, Alicia participating with exquisite sensibility in their present happiness, as she had done in their former dangers and distress.

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LETTER XXXVIII.

A FIFTH ingredient, Ladies, in the female character, necessary to render you the agreeable and endearing companions of our sex, and which it is to be hoped many of you possess, is that of soft, modest, and complacent manners, accompanied with meekness and good humour. These are true feminine graces, are irresistibly captivating, and when combined, win our affections, and subdue our hearts. They are inexpressibly attractive even without beauty; and when united with it, they render the empire of female charms as permanent as complete. I must observe, at the same time, that the graces, of which I am treating, are the gift of nature, more than the result of study, and that though they may be improved by cultivation, they cannot be properly acquired by exercise or habit. An artificial politeness, and even softness of manners, may indeed be attained by frequenting good company; but these will be found in all cases, a poor substitute for that genuine benignity

nity of disposition, and that modesty and complacency of manners, which beam in the eye, and irradiate the countenance, of their fair possessors.

I mentioned a meekness of disposition likewise, as an important ingredient in the character of women. The man who is not impressed with a conviction of the superior value of this quality, and who is not captivated by its charms, nor affected by its influence, may be assured, that he is dead to all the finer sensibilities of the human heart; and has no just idea of female excellence. Genuine meekness of temper stands opposed to all the fiercer, more violent, and boisterous passions of our nature. It is like *the wisdom that descendeth from above, gentle and easy to be intreated;* and like true Christian charity, it *thinketh no evil, but believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.* It is likewise opposed to arrogance, anger, and self-conceit. It is the amiable offspring of humility, and is characterized by a lowliness of mind, and by an universal mildness of deportment. I cannot give a higher idea of the supereminent excellence of this quality, of which I am treating, than by observing, that it was the distinguishing ingredient in the character of the divine Author of our religion, who was eminently *meek and lowly in heart.* Good humour, which I mentioned, my amiable countrywomen, as the last of the qualities above-mentioned, for rendering you the agreeable friends and companions of our sex, is indeed a quality of the highest estimation, and when founded upon

upon good nature, gives a peculiar zest and relish to all the more endearing reciprocations of friendship. That good humour which has its foundation in good nature, (for I am sensible there is a momentary kind of good humour, inspired by a sudden elation of the animal spirits, in consequence of a favourable change of fortune,) differs from the last mentioned quality principally, as a particular action does from a fixed habit. We may add, that the former is displayed in a more captivating manner, and possesses a more animated expression than the latter, of which, however, it is the genuine offspring. The one is like the mild and pleasing splendour of a vernal day, without a cloud; the other is like the serene temperature of good weather, undisturbed by any surly or inclement blast. This happy disposition, this unclouded sunshine of the soul, is, I confess, not very often found either in the male or female character; but it cannot be denied that it is sometimes to be met with. Wherever this mild and pleasing temper is discernible, as it is the best qualification for real friendship, so it constitutes one of the brightest ornaments in the character of women. Happy beyond the common lot of humanity is that fortunate youth, who has found a female friend and companion in connubial life, thus distinguished. Let him suitably prize the inestimable jewel, and rejoice in the possession of a woman, who, if she unite virtue and good sense, with the quality of which I am treating, the com-

combination of such excellencies will raise her character nearly to a level with the angelic nature.

The effects of that meekness and good humour, which I have been recommending, in mitigating and correcting the temper of a churlish husband, were remarkably manifested in the History of Imperiosus and Prudentia, related in the following Letter.

LET-

LETTER XXXIX.

IMPERIOSUS was the son of a scrivener in London, and was bred to his father's business; but as he did not relish it, he was sent to a wealthy uncle in Liverpool, who initiated him in trade, and destined him for his heir, as he had no children of his own, meaning, at the same time, that he should live with great œconomy, and improve, not spend the fortune he intended to leave him. The old gentleman was a widower; having been somewhat unfortunate in his first choice, he was not much inclined to make a second experiment in matrimony; and having both an affection for his nephew, and confidence in his prudence, he recommended it to him to look out for a wife, who could manage the affairs of his family with discretion, would be œconomical in the expence of house-keeping, and prove obsequious to the will of her husband.

Imperiosus was very attentive to his advice, which indeed perfectly coincided with his own sentiments; and

and being put in immediate possession of half the fortune of his uncle, who retired to a seat he had in the north of England, upon the other half, he resolved to look out for a wife, that corresponded as nearly as possible, both to his uncle's ideas and to his own.

It was not long before he found a young lady of a most amiable temper, united with sense and virtue, named Prudentia, the daughter of a country gentleman of small fortune in the neighbourhood; and who, though she was genteelly bred, was educated with that sobriety and œconomy that suited her father's income. This last circumstance, without regard to any other qualification, determined the choice of Imperiosus; and as the proposed match was, in point of interest, much beyond what Prudentia could have expected, and the person of her lover was at the same time not disagreeable, she was persuaded by her parents to listen to his addresses, and they were married in less than a month after his first visit.

Prudentia, however, soon found, to her unhappy experience, that she had very little enjoyment of the fortune to which she had been raised. Imperiosus was narrow and sordid in his œconomy, grudged his wife every article of decent apparel, and was absolute and tyrannical in the government of his family. Though she sat at the head of her master's table for the sake of form, she was in every other respect treated, not as the mistress of the house, but as a servant. Her management, little trust as she had,

had, was examined with jealousy and suspicion, and her husband betrayed a want of confidence in her, which was obvious to her own servants. Prudentia gently remonstrated with Imperiosus, upon the cruelty and unreasonableness of his conduct, but in vain. He reminded her of the dutiful submission she owed to the will of her husband; but his increasing churlishness and ill humour, by preying continually upon her mind, at last threw her into a decay, which endangered her life. Imperiosus was never sensible of the folly and barbarity of his conduct, till he observed its melancholy effects on the declining constitution of Prudentia. When he saw the vivid bloom of health and beauty, gradually forsaking her once rosy cheek, which now began to exhibit the pallid hue of disease, he was for the first time stung with remorse, at the cruel injury he had done to such unexampled meekness, and felt a solicitude and tenderness awaken within him, which he had never before experienced.

About this time, Candidus, a cousin of Imperiosus, who had lately returned from the West Indies, where he had made a considerable fortune, came to pay him a visit. As he had heard of the amiable character and affecting situation of Prudentia, and knew the temper and dispositions of his kinsman, he determined to talk to him with plainness and freedom; and to paint the probable consequences of his barbarous treatment of his wife, in the strongest colours.

When

When Candidus, who was a man of sensibility and worth, saw the lovely Prudentia decaying in her prime, like the rose blasted in its bloom, his soul was dissolved into tenderness and sympathy with the deplorable situation of the fair sufferer; and at the same time filled with indignation at the author of her sufferings. Perceiving, however, that Imperiosus himself was deeply affected with her languishing state, of which he considered himself as the cause, he determined to spare him the pain of upbraiding him with his unkindness and cruelty; and he suggested every mean by which the declining constitution of Prudentia might possibly be restored.

Imperiosus, before the arrival of his friend, had indeed, not only implored and obtained the forgiveness of his wife, but had for some time behaved to her with all the tenderness and kindness which her situation required, and he was now, from inclination, as well as from a sense of duty, very much disposed to continue that behaviour, of which he perceived, with pleasure, the happy effects on the constitution of Prudentia.

Having, by the advice of his friends, consulted some eminent physicians on the state of her health, they gave it as their opinion, that she should be carried to the South of France. As soon, therefore, as she was able to bear the fatigue of travelling, he set out with her himself for Dover, and crossing the Channel, they directed their course to Montpelier, where

where in a few months her health was perfectly re-established. As the business of Imperiosus now required his presence in England, they returned together, one of the happiest couples that ever Hymen joined together in the bonds of wedlock; Prudentia having exhibited, in the reformation of her husband, an illustrious example of the effects of meekness and good humour, in softening and humanizing a temper naturally surly and overbearing.

LETTER XL.

A Sixth ingredient in the composition of the female character, Ladies, necessary to render you the valuable companions of man, is a Susceptibility of Friendship, both with our sex and with your own. This susceptibility, which implies a mutual unreserved communication of sentiments and feelings, is so necessary in the matrimonial state in particular, that there can be no complete confidence, nor perfect harmony or happiness in that state, without it. But in the single state, it forms a respectable and amiable trait in the female character. A young woman who has no individual of her own sex of a congenial taste and disposition, with whom she can hold the sweet intercourse of kindred minds, and with whom she is connected by the mutual ties of esteem and affection, is indeed much to be pitied, as she is a kind of solitary being in the creation, and is a stranger to the finest feelings, and to the tenderest sympathies of the human heart; at the same time that she is deprived, when

when under the pressure of affliction, of one of the sweetest consolations of human life, that of pouring out her full heart into the bosom of a friend.

It hath indeed been petulantly, and in my opinion unjustly, if not somewhat malignantly, observed of your sex in general, by some individuals of ours, who are not much disposed to treat the Ladies with candour, that they are not very susceptible of friendship towards one another. The truth is, there is so much selfishness, inconstancy, and caprice manifested in the intercourse which most men and women hold with those of their respective sexes, for whom they nevertheless profess very great regard, that genuine friendship, which implies an ardent, generous and disinterested zeal to promote the interest and happiness of the persons who are the objects of our affection, is a very rare attainment; but in my opinion, it is as often found in the female character as in the male.

I will at the same time readily acknowledge, that women are generally more sincere and ardent in their regard for their male, than for their female friends; a circumstance for which we are undoubtedly under great obligations to them, and which shews that the sexes were formed for each other. It is for this reason, I would advise unmarried Ladies, not to trust the married dames, their former friends, too much with their secrets, lest their husbands should, in a flow of good humour and mutual confidence, be sometimes unwarily let into them. Women indeed

have been often accused of the want of that secrecy which is an essential requisite in friendship; and their too free and easy communications to their husbands have given rise to this opinion. I must acknowledge, that the accusations of the men are very ungenerous upon this point. I will by no means say, nor do I think, that women are incapable of keeping one anothers secrets; but I am persuaded, that for the most part they keep the secrets intrusted to them by our sex, much better than those communicated to them by their own. Many little jealousies and rivalships arise betwixt young women, which often occasion the discovery of one anothers secrets; and which consequently produce a breach of friendship betwixt them. Between two persons of different sexes no such jealousies can arise; and as the passions of women are naturally keen and ardent, after they have once conceived an esteem for, and an attachment to any individual of our sex, they become, from the most generous motives, very sincere and zealous in their endeavours to promote his interest and happiness. There is always something congenial in the dispositions and characters of two persons of different sexes, that leads them to form this connection, which is founded upon mutual esteem, and cemented and strengthened by an attachment to, and respect for each other. I have known instances of a warm friendship, contracted betwixt persons of different sexes and unequal ages, but of similar tastes and dispositions, inviolably preserved and exerted, when

when opportunities occurred, in all the kind and disinterested offices which could have been expected from such a connection.

Of the sincerity and fervour of this friendship, exercised in favour of several individuals of my own sex, the agreeable Constantia afforded a striking example; and as the Author of these Letters had the honour to be ranked in the number of her friends, he cannot omit embracing this opportunity of shewing his respect to her memory, and his sense of her worth, by giving a slight sketch of her character in the following Letter.

LETTER XLI.

HISTORY OF CONSTANTIA.

CONSTANTIA was the daughter of a gentleman of moderate fortune in the North of Scotland, from whom she had received an education suitable to her station and prospects in life. As she inherited from nature a fine face, a tolerable person, and a good understanding, and had at the same time improved her mind by reading, conversation, and reflection, she soon attained a distinguished preeminence among her own sex, and became the object of a particular respect and attachment to some of the most discerning of ours. Yet the attention and compliments that were generally paid her, neither elated her mind with vanity, nor puffed it up with pride. But they were productive, I am apt to think, of one unlucky and no uncommon effect, that of inspiring a hope, which is not always gratified, of making an advantageous match by a marriage above her fortune, though not beyond her merit.

Constantia,

Constantia, as might have been expected, had, in her younger days, several offers of marriage that were thought conducive both to her interest and credit; but her heart seemed not yet to have been penetrated by the darts, nor consumed by the fires of love, or if it was consumed by those fires, she carefully smothered the flame which they excited, in her own bosom. At any rate, her affections appeared not to have been engaged, by any of the gentlemen who solicited her in marriage, and she was too ingenuous and just, both to them and to herself, to bestow her hand, where she could not surrender her heart. Constantia, after being long admired in the circle in which she was destined to move, and after uniformly maintaining a blameless, untainted, and respectable character among all her acquaintance, saw herself, without peevishness or ill humour, arrive at that period, when *lovers* not *friends*, *fled far from her*, and at that state which beauty deprecates and deplores, the solitary, and for the most part comfortless state, of an old maid. Yet this state, which few of her sex, comparatively speaking, know how to support with good humour, Constantia bore, not merely with serenity and good humour, but with complacency and dignity united.—In proportion as she advanced in life, her attachment to her male friends, always sincere and disinterested, appeared to grow more ardent. Her sensibility, which was exquisite, enabled her to enter into their concerns with an earnestness and fervour, that in-

dicated a warm and benevolent heart, and she felt a genuine pleasure in every successful attempt to promote their credit, reputation, and happiness. As she was distinguished by her good breeding, gentleness, and amiableness of manners, she was universally and justly respected by all her acquaintance, and her memory will ever be dear to such of her friends as were capable to discern and value her transcendent worth.

LET-

LETTER XLII.

THE last qualification, Ladies, that I shall mention, as necessary to render you the agreeable and estimable friends and companions of the most estimable part of our sex, is a talent for rational, instructive and serious Conversation, occasionally mingled with pleasantry.

That the conversation of many women, even of superior rank, of genteel education, and who are supposed to possess elegant, as they certainly possess fashionable accomplishments, is often trifling and uninstructive, is a notorious and melancholy truth, though there are doubtless many honourable examples of the contrary. It cannot however be denied, that the common strain of female conversation and eloquence is not only trifling, but that the standard of excellence, at which many women of rank are taught to aspire, is very low and defective. If any Lady is inclined to differ from me upon this point, let her reflect a little upon the usual topics of female conversation, and she will perhaps change her opinion;

nion; and if she is candid and ingenuous, will acknowledge, that it is any thing rather than rational and instructive. What, allow me to ask you, are those topics? Do not the merits of an actor or actress upon the stage, the powers of a vocal or instrumental performer at Ranelagh or Vauxhall, the variety and richness of the dresses at court on a birth-day, the multifarious grotesque figures at a masquerade, the crowds that frequent the tumultuous routs of the vain and giddy votaries of fashion, and the sums gained and lost by the vicissitudes of play, constitute in general, the usual subjects of female conversation in the higher walks of life?—And ought these to be the sole, or principal subjects of conversation among rational beings, destined for a future and immortal existence? I perceive, Ladies, I am in hazard of becoming serious, and some of you perhaps, from a dislike to the sermonizing strain, may be provoked to throw aside these Letters with disgust; but allow me, my fair countrywomen, to observe, that the present subject is deeply interesting both to your rational and moral improvement, and as such, demands your most serious attention. Are the topics of instructive and entertaining conversation, think ye, so few, and so barren of improvement and amusement, as to oblige you to have recourse to the frivolous, reiterated, and exhausted subjects of modish conversation above enumerated? Do not the variety, beauty and grandeur of the works of nature, the wonders of the vegetable, mineral, and animal kingdoms, the

various

various revolutions of the planets, the stupendous frame and dazzling glories of the starry heavens, the œconomy of divine providence, and the riches of divine grace, present to the pious and contemplative mind subjects of admiration and wonder, ever various and ever new? These, how often soever repeated, never pall upon the mental appetite, which is highly gratified by the rich repast provided for it by a pious and fertile imagination, opening to the rational and devout mind inexhaustible treasures of knowledge and wisdom, which, unlike the stale and vapid pleasures of fashionable life, are enjoyed by the votaries of Reason and Virtue, not only without languor or satiety, but with renewed and still increasing delight. Wretched and vitiated must be that taste, which can forego such rational, elevating and exquisite joys, for the vain amusements of a sickly distempered imagination, which is perpetually in search of that happiness it cannot find, and which in order to avoid the torment of self-reflection, hunts after the fleeting phantom of pleasure, through all her fancied recesses, from the mere influence of habit, and from vacancy of mind, without any prospect of enjoyment or satisfaction in pursuit. Ah! my amiable friends, if you knew the importance and value of the intellectual and moral pleasures I recommend to your cultivation, if you knew the tranquility and consolation they would impart to your minds, the dignity they would reflect on your characters, and the effect they would give to your charms, in captivating and securing our affections,

tions, and in rendering your empire over the human heart inexpressibly pleasing, as well as absolute and irresistible; if you knew their efficacy in the improvement of the understanding, and in the melioration of the heart; if you knew the sense, spirit, and grace they would infuse into your conversation, which would then become the vehicle both of entertainment and instruction, you would endeavour to acquire those valuable accomplishments, which can alone qualify you to be the respectable and truly amiable friends and companions of our sex. Whence, Ladies, does it happen, that so many of your sex fail in attaining the respect and esteem of the more sensible part of ours, and that ascendency over the affections of their lovers and husbands, which they have it in their power to obtain? A complete answer to this question would lead me into too wide a field, and into too long a digression. I would only observe in general, that the causes of this failure are to be found in the erroneous and defective system of female education, and in that everlasting round of dissipation, which like a devouring gulph hath drawn the giddy, vain, and opulent of both sexes, within the vortex of its eddying whirl. The torrent of modern manners is too strong to be resisted by the efforts of any one individual, however great or powerful. It can only be effectually repelled by the collective counsel and aid of the great, the wealthy, and the wise, supported and seconded by their example in resolutely stemming the tide which threatens to immerge us in its waves, and to overwhelm

whelm our land with a deluge of profligacy and folly. If any thing can raise the tone of national manners to its proper height, or the female character to its just standard of excellence, it must be the united and vigorous co-operation of Ladies of rank and fortune, acting upon a wise and preconcerted plan, and giving effect to their recommendations and efforts, by an uniform, steady and resolute example. The consequence of your patriotic endeavours, would be the immediate reformation of our sex; and by their reformation you would enjoy the singular felicity and honour of contributing most effectually both to the prosperity and salvation of your country. But I feel myself transported beyond the bounds I had prescribed to myself, in painting the beneficial effects of your conversation and example; and therefore return to illustrate the latter part of the observation with which I set out, viz. that a talent for rational, instructive, and serious conversation, might sometimes be very properly mixed with innocent pleasantry.

Reasoning and reflection, seriousness and sentiment, are the proper characters of that conversation, which is peculiarly suitable to rational and immortal beings. But the free and unrestrained intercourse of sentiment which usually prevails between accomplished persons of both sexes, opens to them so many sources of mental enjoyment, that he must be an austere misanthropist, indeed, who can deny to himself, or refuse to others, that "feast of reason, and that flow of soul," which is inspired and communicated by

by the reciprocal sallies of innocent pleasantry and good humour, disseminated on both sides in the conversation of such persons. It is in this select social circle, my amiable friends, that many of you are qualified to bear so distinguished a part. In the company of sensible, intelligent, and virtuous persons of both sexes, who wish to please and to be pleased with one another, you will seldom fail to receive and to communicate both pleasure and improvement.—It is in this society that the graces are successfully cultivated, and that the pleasantry and the jeux d'esprit, which are untinctured by asperity or malevolence, and are the result of gaiety and good nature united, tend to produce the smile of complacency in every countenance, and to diffuse the glow of humanity through every heart. Such are the important advantages accruing to your sex, from a talent for rational instruction and serious conversation, occasionally mingled with pleasantry and good humour; a talent which many of you possess, or might possess, and which eminently qualifies you to be the respectable and amiable friends and companions of man. I shall exhibit the happy effects resulting from the possession and exertion of this excellent talent, as manifested in the character of the amiable and accomplished Euphemia, delineated in the following Letter.

LETTER XLIII.

EUPHEMIA was the eldest daughter of Antenor and Monimia, who were both of them distinguished by their good sense, by their pious and benevolent dispositions, and by their amiable manners. As she discovered in her childhood, a laudable, not a trifling and impertinent curiosity, and at the same time, a strong propensity to reading, Antenor, who was himself a scholar, took care to give a proper direction to this propensity, without neglecting those elegant and ornamental arts which contribute to the accomplishment of the female character. These arts, however, were cultivated by Euphemia, not as a study, but as an amusement, and were never suffered by her father to interfere with her more serious and important occupations. In the superintendence and direction of her studies, he took a very different method from what is usually adopted by most parents, by leading her into a certain plan and order of reading, instead of that irregular and desultory method, of allowing young girls to peruse every book of amusement that chance

chance throws in their way. Keeping in his eye the great object of female education, the formation of the heart to the love of virtue; he effected this purpose by familiar instruction, and by striking examples and illustrations. His next care was, not to make her a profound scholar, lest by attempting this he should divert her attention from the duties of her proper sphere, but to make her a rational and agreeable companion to the man, to whom she might be afterwards united in marriage, and to render her both a knowing and an accomplished woman. With this view, after having her taught to read with correctness and propriety, and after rendering her complete mistress of English Grammar, he read with her himself, the best authors in the English language, that were equally calculated to inform her judgment and improve her taste; but her principal studies were Natural and Civil History and Geography, Memoirs and Travels, which served at once to gratify a rational curiosity, and to store the mind with useful knowledge.

After her reading a course of ancient and modern history, and after leading her to make proper reflections on what she had perused, Euphemia was taught to read the history of her own country, with a peculiar interest and attention; to trace the series of the great scenes and events which it exhibits, and to mark and study the distinguished characters who had effected the most remarkable revolutions in these kingdoms, in different periods. In conversing with

Euphemia,

Euphemia, upon these interesting subjects, Antenor was highly pleased with her judicious remarks upon the events related, and upon the different means by which they were accomplished.

As Euphemia discovered a natural gaiety and good humour, and possessed at the same time the benevolent and pious affections in a high degree, her father was careful to regulate and give a proper direction to both; and while he indulged her innocent pleasantry in conversation, he cherished in her mind those pious and benevolent affections, which were the sources of her highest enjoyment, and of her greatest happiness.

Having now finished her education, both in its more important and ornamental branches, in which her admirable genius enabled her to make singular proficiency; she was carried in her eighteenth year to London, by an aunt, a widow lady of virtue, discretion and good breeding, named Ardelia, by whom she was introduced to several families of rank and fashion; her own judgment directing her in the choice of her associates and friends.

The various amusements of the metropolis, though at first captivating and alluring, from their novelty, to a youthful imagination, had not the power to vitiate or corrupt Euphemia's pure, steady, and well tutored mind. She assigned to these their proper value, time and limits, and never suffered them to encroach upon her more important pursuits. Her solid understanding taught her to discern and to despise the ordinary routine of visiting, and the reiterated and

tiresome diversions of modish life; in which she participated no farther than a regard to good manners required; while she sought for more rational and instructive entertainment in the conversation of a few select friends of both sexes, to whose society her own distinguished talents and acquisitions, procured her a cordial welcome, and from several individuals of whom, she met with a very favourable reception.—Among the young gentlemen of cultivated minds and refined manners, who visited at the house of Ardelia, Antonio, a youth of shining talents, extensive knowledge, and elegant accomplishments, lately returned from his travels, attracted the general admiration of the ladies, and had conciliated no small portion of the esteem and even favour of Euphemia. Antonio perceived with extasy the interest he had gained in her affections, and as his own were strongly attached to this idol of his heart, he solicited an union with her in marriage, with great earnestness, as essential to his happiness. As this union was approved of by her parents, it was accomplished upon her return to the country, to the satisfaction and joy of the happy couple, and of all their relatives and friends.

Euphemia, conscious of the duties resulting from this new connection, was solicitous to discharge them with fidelity and honour. Though she possessed talents and accomplishments superior to those of most of her sex, she was restrained by her prudence and good sense from any unnecessary and ostentatious display of them. She considered these in their proper

per light, as important ingredients indeed, in an estimable character, but as valuable only so far as they contributed to real utility, and were rendered subservient to the instruction and entertainment of her family and friends, as well as conducive to the happiness of herself and of her husband. To him she was an affectionate wife, an entertaining companion, and a faithful friend. In his more important concerns she participated with tender solicitude; and while she soothed his melancholy hours by her affection and sympathy, she enlivened his social pleasures by the sprightliness and pleasantry of her conversation.

LETTER XLIV.

AS I have shewn, Ladies, that the characters you are called upon, and which many of you are qualified, to sustain, are those of the friends and companions of man; and have likewise considered those weaknesses and vices in the female mind which disqualify you for this relation, as well as the talents and virtues which peculiarly fit you for it, and which it is to be hoped many of you possess; endeavouring to confirm my observations upon these subjects by apposite examples; I am naturally led, in coincidence with the general design of these Letters, to enquire into the mental advantages, resulting from an easy and familiar intercourse with the more respectable part of your sex, maintained upon our part with that delicacy, respect and politeness, which are due to the fairest and most amiable part of our creation; and on yours, with that modesty, propriety and decorum, which are suitable both to your character and sex. The advantages arising from a discreet and well regulated

gulated connection betwixt them, are unquestionably great to both sexes, though it may be difficult to determine which of the two are the greater gainers.

It cannot fail to be observed, that there is a certain roughness and aukwardness in the characters and manners of those individuals of our sex, who have had few opportunities of seeing and conversing with accomplished women. This roughness and awkwardness, therefore, can only be worn off by the conversation and society of such women. I am aware, indeed, that it will be alledged, as an objection to an indiscriminate conversation, at least, with your sex, that the men will, by this means, often from fashion and a desire of imitation, as well as from a view of recommending themselves to the favour of the ladies, catch from contagion their follies, and will in return frequently communicate to them some degree of their own depravity. This I acknowledge, is an accidental, but by no means a necessary consequence of such conversation. On the contrary, by prudence and discretion, all the advantages of such a connection may be secured, without its inconveniencies and dangers. At the worst, I affirm, that a young man is in less hazard of having his morals corrupted, by associating frequently with women of unblemished characters, though of slender abilities, and whose understandings are very little cultivated by reading or reflection, than by associating wholly and indiscriminately with young men of his own age and rank, whose intellectual talents may be far superior to those

of the former. By cultivating the acquaintance of such women, if he is not possessed of good natural parts, that may enable him to discover their foibles and their weaknesses, and as much as possible guard against their influence, his character may indeed, in a great measure become frivolous, like theirs; but there will be no danger, from frequenting their company, of its becoming profligate. If a young man, however, of good principles and dispositions, wish to attain the full advantages of a well regulated conversation with the softer sex, let him cultivate the acquaintance of, and form connections with women of sense and virtue, wherever he can find them; and he cannot fail to derive both pleasure and improvement from their society. The advantages of such an acquaintance and such connections, are numerous and important. By frequenting the company, and cultivating the friendship of women of this stamp, the natural roughness of the masculine character is not only worn off, as I have already observed, but the man who is fortunate enough to be honoured with the friendship of such ladies, will acquire a certain polish in his behaviour, and if he is not a very awkward scholar, a vivacity of disposition, and an elegance and refinement of manners, which will render him an agreeable guest and a pleasant companion in every company. Nor are these the sole advantages of such connections. They are attended with still more beneficial effects than any of those I have yet mentioned. By a liberal interchange of senti-

ments

ments, in consequence of such connections, the understanding is enlarged, every tender and virtuous sensibility is awakened and increased; and the heart is meliorated, at the same time that the mind is improved. The advantages, indeed, of such an association are mutual and reciprocal. From cultivating an acquaintance with intelligent, sensible, and well principled young men, the ladies will derive real and solid improvement. Their minds by such society will be enriched with knowledge; their faculties of reasoning and reflection will be strengthened; and they will not only be qualified for becoming more valuable companions both to our sex and to their own, but will be better fitted for acting the various parts that may be allotted them in life.

There are two classes of men, who may be said to stand much in need of the society of accomplished women; and who, if it be not their own fault, may derive both improvement and entertainment from such society. These are men of business, and men of retirement and study. A constant attention to trade, and to the arts of gain, superinduces a kind of rust over the minds and manners of the former class, which is very unfavourable to politeness, and renders their behaviour disagreeable to well bred persons of both sexes. If such men wish to have the rust worn off, they can adopt no method so effectual, as to spend their leisure hours in the company of women of good breeding and elegant accomplishments; by the in-

fluence of whose graces and conversation, they may acquire that civility and refinement of manners, which they could never otherwise have obtained.

But there is no set of men to whom the society of women of genteel education and refined manners, may be rendered more useful and entertaining, than the studious and sedentary. Some persons of this description, have been regarded, and often with reason, by men of the world, as mere book-worms, utterly unacquainted with life and manners. To such persons, the conversation of accomplished women becomes, at necessary intervals of study, a most agreeable relaxation from the more intense exercise of the mental powers, and a source of equal pleasure and improvement. As an inducement, my amiable countrywomen, to take the more studious part of mankind under your gentle tuition, let me remind you, that though at first they may be awkward pupils, they will repay the attention you may be kind enough to bestow on them, by imparting to you that knowledge which is the fruit of study. If however, you expect this benefit from their conversation, let me caution you in pity to them, to beware of pouring upon them the full splendour of those charms, which as they have unsettled many a head, may likewise happen to derange their faculties; for every studious man is not blessed, shall I say? or cursed, with the apathy of Dr. Aikenside, who congratulates himself upon being proof against their influence.

Blest

Blest be my fate; I need not pray,
That love-sick dreams be kept away:
No female charms, of fancy born,
Nor dimpled cheek, nor sparkling eye,
With me the bands of sleep untie,
Or steal by minutes half the sauntering morn.

I am aware, that it will be alledged by some persons, over-rigid in their sentiments, that the communications betwixt the sexes I recommend, may give scope for the indulgence of affections of a tender kind, and that it may terminate in the closest and most intimate union. I grant that it may; and if it should, I cannot see any harm arising from the indulgence of such affections, and the formation of such an union, conducted on both sides with prudence and discretion. The advantages of it on the contrary are manifest. By frequent opportunities of seeing and conversing with one another, the parties become better acquainted, their affections are drawn forth, their hearts are cemented together, and the surest foundation is laid for the warmest love and the most lasting friendship. Let it be observed, that the sentiments I have advanced upon this point, refer entirely to the case of young ladies and gentlemen, who have attained a full maturity of judgement, and whose virtue, discretion and good sense, may render it safe for both to cultivate an acquaintance, of which I have endeavoured to point out the beneficial effects.—Should any person entertain a doubt with regard to these, I would desire him to consider, that, as in a country,

country, and under a government like our own, there must be a liberal intercourse betwixt the sexes, whether it be not in every respect safer and more eligible, for young persons of both sexes, of good dispositions and virtuously educated, to associate together, and improve one anothers minds by conversation, than to cultivate an indiscriminate acquaintance with all the young people that chance may throw in the way. With regard to those young gentlemen and ladies, whose judgments are by no means matured by reflection and experience, parents and guardians cannot be too attentive to the affections they indulge, the company they keep, and the connections they form.

After all that hath been said of the mutual advantages of a well regulated connection betwixt the sexes, I must remind you, my fair readers, that it will require all your prudence and all your fortitude, to resist the temptations and avoid the dangers incidental to a connection with some of our sex, into which you may at first be unwarily betrayed, without any fault of your own. I need not suggest to the more experienced part of my countrywomen, that there are several of our sex, who under the guise of insinuating manners, aided by a smooth tongue and a smiling countenance, plant their snares for the ruin of the virtuous and the innocent.—So true it is that one

"May smile, and smile, and smile, and be a villain."

I would therefore, particularly caution you, my younger

younger female friends, whose experience may not yet have rendered you acquainted with the artifices of the designing and unprincipled part of our sex, to study attentively the characters of those persons whom you admit into your more intimate society, and honour with your confidence. Besides your own study of their characters, it will be very proper to ask the advice of your friends, whose prudence and knowledge of the world, qualify them for giving you good counsel, with regard to the communication you may safely hold, with those gentlemen, that may solicit either your friendship or your love. To such of you, as may feel your hearts unwarily melted into tenderness for those false lovers who mean only to betray you, I would address the beautiful and emphatical caution of an amiable poet, and sincere friend of your sex:

Ah! then, ye fair,
Be greatly cautious of your sliding hearts;
Dare not the side-long glance, th' infectious sigh,
The down-cast look, in meek submission drest,
But full of tempting guile.

In order to avoid the danger resulting from the society of these insidious and designing men, I would advise you to cultivate only the friendship of men of known principles and honour; for such friendship, cultivated with mutual sincerity and ardour, will be a lasting source of mutual advantage and enjoyment to you both, while it will secure you against the perfidious arts of the worthless and the profligate.

LETTER. *

HAVING in my last Letter taken a view of the mutual advantages of a well-regulated intercourse betwixt the sexes, I shall, in the subsequent Letters, consider in the first place, those general duties which are incumbent upon all women, of every class and condition; and in the last place, those of a particular nature, obligatory on different individuals, in their respective spheres of domestic life. I begin with the duties of a general nature.

Of those duties, Piety towards God is the first and most momentous. In an age like the present, in which

* This Letter, on the Duties of Women to their Creator, having been omitted by mistake, the Author, considering it as an essential part of the work, has contrived to insert it in its proper place, immediately after the Letter on the mutual Advantages of a well-regulated Intercourse betwixt the Sexes; but as it was impossible to alter the folios of the pages, without printing again almost a fifth part of the whole, the Author, in the Letter he has inserted, in order to prevent confusion, omits the numeration of the pages altogether in the sheet inserted.

which both our religion and morals are regulated by fashion, almost as much as our dress, it may seem necessary to apologize to some of my fair readers, for the mention of piety, which is certainly not a very fashionable quality at present. Yet, to such of them as are of a more serious turn, and are inclined to think and judge for themselves, it may not be improper to suggest, that religion and morality are the great pillars upon which the whole fabric of society and civil government rests, and which once overturned, the superstructure which they serve to support, must tumble into ruins. Of the direful effects of the extinction of religion and morals, in bursting the bonds of legal government, and subverting the fundamental laws of society, we have seen in a neighbouring nation a late awful and alarming example; and on my more serious countrywomen, I trust it will not be without its due influence. But, have we profited as we ought, from so striking an example? I apprehend we have not. Without making any comparison betwixt the present times and the past, I cannot help observing, that considering the subject in a general point of view, religion constitutes a very small part of the moral picture of our own age, and that I am old enough to remember its occupying a much larger space in that picture. Permit me, my honoured friends, to observe, that such of you in particular as move in the higher ranks of life, might do much to bring religion once more into credit, by your patronage, recommendations, and example; a line of conduct

which would eminently adorn your rank and character, and procure you the approbation and favour of that God, who has declared, that "such as honour him he will honour." Should you fail in your pious endeavours, and "should religion," to adopt the words of a respectable clergyman, "leave our land, you will at least have the mournful honour of strewing her last parting steps." In the mean time, I beg you to remember, that piety towards your Creator is the most sacred and indispensible of all obligations. In recommending this duty to you, I wish to appear, not in the character of your tutor, but in that of your sincere and zealous friend, earnestly desirous to promote both your present and your future happiness. In the observations I am about to offer upon this subject, I shall take it for granted, that your parents, in conducting the plan of your education, have instructed you in the principles, and habituated you to the practice, of religion, in your early years; conscious as I am, that this most important duty is by many parents grossly neglected. The truth is, it hath been the hard, and almost singular fate of religion in all ages, to have been wounded through misconception and misrepresentation in the house of its friends; and its venerable form hath, from very different motives, been so much disfigured, that its genuine features are hardly to be traced. It hath been not unfrequently exhibited to the young, in particular, in a morose and austere form, and in a garb that appeared forbidding and repulsive, calculated to excite their disgust,

rather

rather than to conciliate their esteem, their veneration, and their love. The religion, however, which I wish to recommend to your cultivation and practice, shall neither be gloomy nor austere in its outward form, or its inward temper. On the contrary, it shall be a liberal, a pleasant, and a cheerful service, equally remote from superstition and formality. It shall be like that which descendeth from the Father of light, the Author of all good, and which is described by an Apostle who had imbibed a large portion of its benign spirit and divine influence, as *gentle and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.*

This piety implies just and rational sentiments of the Deity, accompanied with devout and fervent affections towards him, and a cheerful obedience to his will, flowing from gratitude to, and love of him, in the highest degree.

I said, that it implies just and rational sentiments of the supreme Being. Without such sentiments of that Almighty Being whom we profess to worship, the homage we offer him can neither be a reasonable nor an acceptable service. It is owing to false and unworthy conceptions of his nature and perfections, that superstition has in all ages prevailed so much in the world. Did we properly and impartially exercise our reasoning faculties, and attentively consider the dictates both of reason and revelation, we could not fall into such gross errors, as are too common upon this subject. These faithful guides, acting with combined influence under that illumination of that Divine Spirit,

Spirit, which leads the sincere and humble enquirer into all truth, would teach us, that "*God is a Spi-* "*rit, and that they who would worship him accept-* "*ably, must worship him in spirit and in truth.*" It would teach us the absurdity and folly of all external observances, however pompous, of all sacrifices, however costly, of all mortifications and penances, however severe, when substituted as a compensation for the violation or neglect of moral duty, or considered as means of averting the displeasure, or conciliating the favour, of that infinitely pure and perfect Being, who delights only in the spontaneous homage of the sincere, humble, and penitent heart. Look up, therefore, to this Almighty and beneficent Being, as your Protector, your Father, and your Friend, whose power enables him to guard you from every danger, and whose bounty disposes him to supply all your wants. Commit yourselves to his divine protection, and he will preserve you from the "*arrow that flieth* "*in darkness, and from the pestilence that walketh* "*at noon day.*" Implore his favour, which is better than life, and dread his displeasure, which is the worst of evils. Cherish in your minds grateful sentiments towards him, as the bountiful Author of all good, and fix your purest and best affections upon him, as their supreme and alone worthy object. "*Acknowledge* "*him in all your ways, and he will direct your* "*steps.*" Maintain upon your minds a deep and habitual sense of his omnipresence, and of his being the unerring

unerring Witness and impartial Judge of human conduct. Study to act the part he has assigned you, in this state of probation and trial, with conscientious fidelity, influenced by an ardent desire of promoting the glory of your Creator, and animated by the hopes of his favour and love. And while you endeavour to excite those devout affections of gratitude and love towards him as your perpetual Benefactor, study to preserve in your minds an awful reverence of his infinite perfections, a humble trust in his all-protecting Providence, and an unreserved resignation to his sovereign will. From the habitual exercise of these affections, animated by a stedfast faith in your Saviour, and a fervent love of him, you will derive the surest ground of support, consolation, and joy, amidst the various vicissitudes of this mortal life. Their salutary influence will brighten the sunshine of prosperity, and dart a cheering ray through the dark gloom of adversity and affliction. The happy effects indeed resulting from the cultivation of religion, both on private happiness and public tranquillity, are so evident, that it might be reasonably expected its influence should be more general upon all ranks, and on both sexes. Yet, so powerful is the tide of the reigning manners, that it carries every thing before it like a torrent. To check the violence and divert the course of this torrent, which threatens to overwhelm our land, will require the united efforts of the wise and good; and I am inclined to think, that in this

honourable

honourable opposition, your exertions, Ladies, in so good a cause, and in one so worthy of your zeal, might contribute in no inconsiderable degree to stop its progress. I shall explain my meaning, and leave it to your piety and good sense to make the application.

In consequence of the want of religious principle, it may not be improper to remark, as one instance of the degeneracy of the present times, that a very indecent and irreligious practice hath for some time prevailed among many of the *Great*, and begins to prevail among several of their inferiors, who wish to be thought *Great*, of neglecting at their ordinary meals to acknowledge their dependence upon their Maker for their daily bread, or to return thanks for the benefits he hath bestowed on them, their gratitude being in the present case too commonly in an inverse proportion to those benefits. If religion be really conducive to the happiness of the individual and of the community, which I believe will be generally allowed, every practice that tends to weaken its influence on the mind, should be reprobated as inimical to the best interests of society. To such of you as are placed at the head of families, it peculiarly belongs, to discountenance and repress a practice, in which the honour and virtue of your sex, as well as decency and public order, are essentially involved. Let it never be said, therefore, that while elegance and plenty crown your board, and the luxuries of life are poured

forth

forth, in abundance in order to heighten the entertainment, both you and your guests forget to acknowledge your obligations to the bountiful hand which supplies them.

While I recommend to my fair Readers in general, the cultivation and practice of religion, and an acknowledgement of their dependence upon God for all the blessings they enjoy or hope for, I would recommend to the younger part of them in particular, to cultivate early piety, as their surest support and consolation under the afflictions, and the most effectual security against the temptations and dangers, to which they may be subjected in their future lives. All of you, my young friends, are exposed, and many of you may at this moment be doomed, to experience some of those various calamities, which fill up the lot and life of man—calamities, which no human wisdom can foresee, nor any human power prevent. Several of you, it may be supposed, have in your early years been deprived of an honoured parent, perhaps of both your parents, on whom you depended for instruction, protection, and support, and you have been thrown upon the wide world, helpless orphans, unprotected and unprovided, without a friend, without a patron, and without a guide. In this affecting situation, what resource so powerful and so effectual, as an implicit confidence in the protection and providential care of that beneficent Being, who is the Almighty helper of the friendless, who hath declared,

that he "*will preserve the fatherless children alive,*" and hath encouraged "*widows to trust in him.*" Perhaps your honour and your virtue may be endangered by the artifices and villainy of the unprincipled part of our sex, who with the basest perfidy, and with the most unfeeling barbarity, plant their snares for the seduction of the innocent. Where can you find so sure a safeguard from their meditated machinations, as by committing yourselves to the protection of Omnipotence? Or how can you hope to escape the dangers to which you are exposed, so certainly, as by perpetual vigilance, accompanied with fervent prayer to that all-gracious Being, whose power is always engaged on the side of virtue, and who can in a moment blast the designs and defeat the purposes of the profligate?

To the exercise of the devotional affections, many of you, from the vivacity of your imagination, and from the ardour and tenderness of your passions, have, as I observed in a preceding letter, a natural and powerful propensity. Cultivate these affections, therefore, with judgment and discretion, without running to the excess of wild and visionary enthusiasm, to the neglect of the duties of common life. Let your piety, my amiable friends, beam with a pure and steady flame, which may at once enlighten and warm both yourselves and all others that come within the sphere of its influence. Such piety, besides its other more important advantages above-

mentioned,

mentioned, will throw a transcendent lustre over your personal graces and accomplishments, and render their influence over the human heart all-powerful and irresistible.

LET-

LETTER XLV.

BESIDES those duties, Ladies, which you owe to your Creator, there are some others, regarding either yourselves, or those with whom you are connected in social life, equally obligatory upon all women of every class and condition, which it highly concerns you to cultivate. Of this number we may reckon, a general kindness and good-will to all around you, manifested by kind and beneficent actions; sympathy of disposition; modesty in the whole of your behaviour and deportment; meekness; humility; temperance in the enjoyment of all the pleasures of life, and self-denial in the use of some of them.

I mentioned a general kindness and good-will to all around you, as the first of those duties.

In the grand scale of social life, we are all dependent upon one another for mutual exertion, mutual benefits, and mutual aid. If the poor labourer be dependent on the rich for the reward of that labour by which his wants are supplied, the rich are no less

less dependent upon the labourer, for the supply of the necessaries, and to the merchant, the artist, and mechanic, for fu nishing them with the eleganci s, the comfo ts. and the luxuries of life. By this interchange of mutual benefits, both individual and general happiness is promoted, and each contributes and receives his share of the stock of social blessings.—To the increase of this stock, and of the aggregate sum of human happiness, you, my fair readers, are bound by the common ties of humanity, by the fundamental laws of society, and by the dictates of revelation, which declare, that those who do not work, that is, who do not contribute by their exertions in one way or another, to the general good, should not eat, or partake of those benefits for which they have given no equivalent, in the ordinary intercourse and commerce of life. The general fund of human happiness, my fair ones, you may increase by your kind offices and benevolent efforts, which will contribute in a greater or less degree, according to your various abilities and opportunities, to mitigate the sufferings, and increase the comforts of those around you, in the various spheres in which you are destined to move. And allow me to remind you, that as Christians you have a peculiar call, and are under a peculiar obligation to the exercise of the kind and benevolent affections of your nature, from the command of your divine Master, who hath declared universal love to mankind to be an infallible characteristic of his disciples; and hath graciously assured you, that he will consider

consider the least act of kindness, done to any of his brethren, as done to himself, and will reward it accordingly.

I mentioned Sympathy of Disposition, as another affection which you ought to cultivate and exercise.

To the exercise of this amiable affection, many of you, my honoured friends, have in consequence of the sensibility of your dispositions, a natural and powerful propensity; and it is an affection which should be judiciously directed, and frequently exerted.—Those who are endued with a truly sympathetic disposition, will learn "*to weep with them that weep;*" will choose to frequent "*the house of mourning, rather than the house of feasting;*" and the pleasure they feel from doing so, mingled as it is with a sentiment of self-approbation, derived from pouring the balm of consolation into the bosom of the miserable, will prove a happy anticipation of the future rewards of that sympathy, which by the dictates of nature and the precepts of Christianity, they are obliged to exercise.

A third duty, which it is peculiarly incumbent upon you to practise, in the whole of your behaviour and deportment, is Modesty.

This amiable quality constitutes one of the brightest gems in the female character. One is indeed, almost tempted to regard it, as a precious relic of primæval innocence. I am not ignorant, that in one point of view, a contrary inference might be drawn, at least with regard to one particular expression of it;

for

for as we are told, that after the fatal transgression, our first parents being ashamed, hid themselves in the garden, vainly hoping to conceal themselves from the eye of their Maker; it might be argued, that this shame, and those blushes, which were the indication of it, proceded from a consciousness of guilt. Admitting this to be the case, it must still be allowed, that the blush which overspreads the cheek of the virgin, upon hearing an indecent expression, or witnessing unawares an indecent action, though it indicates a knowledge of the indecency of such an expression or action, from seeing or hearing which she cannot shut her eyes or ears, yet the blush which suffuses her cheek, bespeaks a mind free from vitious habits, and uncontaminated by vitious indulgence. Genuine modesty not only turns her averted eye from scenes of indecent behaviour in either sex, but like the sensitive plant shrinks from the unhallowed touch of impurity and impudence. Milton hath accordingly, in his Paradise Lost, with just discernment of feminine excellence, considered this quality, as a distinguishing trait in the character of our venerable mother. He represents her as possessed

> Of innocence and virgin modesty,
> Of virtue, and the conscience of her worth,
> That would be wooed, and, not unsought, be won;
> Not obvious, not obtrusive; but retired,
> The more desirable.

Cultivate this amiable quality then, as a virtue, highly

ly estimable in itself, and on which even the most depraved part of our sex, how much soever they endeavour to undermine it, put the highest value.—Cultivate it with sedulous care, as one of the best preservatives of your innocence, and one of the surest safeguards of your virtue.

Meekness was likewise another duty, which I considered as incumbent upon all women, and it is certainly highly attractive in the younger part of the female sex, in particular. Of all the virtues which enter into the composition, and constitute the excellence of the female character, this is the most amiable and alluring. It is indeed, a grace truly feminine, and when accompanied with sense and discretion, its influence even over the fiercest and haughtiest spirits is beyond conception. Its effect upon the passions of man, may be compared to oil poured upon vinegar, whose acid and fiery particles it sweetens and allays. In like manner, meekness of temper assuages and allays the boisterous passions often prevalent in the masculine character, and mitigates those acrid humours which often poison the cup of life, through its various stages. If I were to give any advice, for the discipline and regulation of the temper of your sex in early life, the first that I should give to the mother or governess, who had the charge of your education, would be, to quell and subdue by every proper mean the violence of passion, whenever it appeared in the character of a young girl, and to endeavour to superinduce that placid temper, and that meek

meek and quiet spirit, which is recommended by apostolical authority, and which is said to be "in the sight of God of great price." This spirit, my amiable friends, I will venture to assure you, will be of infinite consequence to you, in preparing you for the shock of the adverse accidents, and of the various crosses and disappointments, to which you may be exposed in life; and when you enter into connubial engagements, you will find it particularly useful and necessary, for dissipating or conciliating the little jars and dissensions, that may sometimes arise, even betwixt the best matched couples, in the matrimonial state.

Another quality that I would recommend to the cultivation of my female readers, as extremely suitable to our imperfect nature, and peculiarly becoming in young women, is Humility. Pride is a weed of a very disagreeable and noxious nature, and of a very luxuriant growth, both in the male and female breast; and it requires no little pains and care to eradicate it from its native soil. To endeavour to accomplish this purpose, should be one of the great objects of a well conducted plan of education. There is, indeed, no vice in the human character more detestable, or which more completely defeats its own end, than that of pride. This quality never dwells in a mind of sensibility. It springs up only in the cold, callous, and obdurate heart. It commonly appears most conspicuously in young girls, valuing themselves upon their birth, their beauty, or their wealth; and while these girls occasion much mortification, dis-

content and envy among their inferiors, in these respects, they are justly doomed in their turn to experience from their superiors the effect of the same malevolent passions, which they excited in the bosoms of those beneath them.

The pride of genius and mental accomplishments, is likewise sometimes observable in the female character, and it concerns young women to be on their guard against it. To those who are actuated by this passion, the poignant question, "*What hast thou which thou hast not received?* comes home with peculiar force. To this question, I will add the emphatical exhortation of the apostle Peter, as equally applicable to all ranks, and to both sexes, "*Be clothed with humility; for God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble.*"

The last duties that I mentioned, which are wholly of a personal nature, regarding the individual alone by whom they are practised, are, Temperance in the enjoyment of all the pleasures of life, and Self-denial in the use of some of them.

These qualities are by no means of a popular nature, which are like to get into general practice, or general credit, in this pleasurable and self-indulging age. To the sensual, the voluptuous, and the dissipated of either sex, they wear a forbidding and repulsive aspect; but to the more serious and truly wise, they come recommended as faithful friends and valuable allies, and a sure safe-guard of their honour and virtue. In fact, they are the best preservatives

servatives of female innocence in particular, which can only be maintained by shunning the temptations with which it is surrounded, and the dangers to which it is exposed. If a young woman will heedlessly rush into the unceasing round of those reiterated pleasures, which fill up the vacuity of fashionable life, it cannot be wondered at, that her virtue should be swallowed up in the devouring whirlpool of dissipation and folly. If she wish to preserve both her reputation and her virtue, she must beware of approaching too near the fatal eddy, lest she be drawn within its vortex, and with other heedless adventurers be carried down the stream into the gulf of destruction. In order to avoid this danger, habitual temperance, and strict self-denial, are indispensibly requisite.——Female innocence can only be secured by a prudent circumspection, and a timely retreat from those fatal paths, which ultimately lead to the chambers of death, and to the regions of hell. This retreat and consequent security must be effected, if effected at all, by that resolute self-denial, which, seconded by the influence of divine grace, renders us at all times masters of our own conduct.

Let me not be understood, as if by recommending self-denial, I wished to preclude young ladies from mingling occasionally in the crowd of the votaries of fashion; but I would seriously advise them, not to make these their companions and friends. Let them resolutely deny the frequent participation of those

amusements, which consume very unprofitably much time, exhaust the spirits, impair the health, perhaps corrupt the morals of those who are addicted to them, and which to a virtuous mind afford no pleasure upon reflection. This self-denial will doubtless at first be disagreeable, if not painful, to the gay and giddy daughters of vanity, who are deeply immersed in the follies of the age; but let them exert that resolution which duty enjoins, and which conscience approves; let them court wisdom in the shade of retirement and solitude, and they will find, in the end, that "*Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and that all her paths are peace.*"

LET-

LETTER XLVI.

AS I have considered, Ladies, the duties you owe to your Creator, your fellow creatures, and yourselves, obligatory upon all of you without exception, I proceed to point out those pertaining to certain classes of women, resulting from their different relations in life, from which certain obligations arise, corresponding to those relations.

Some of you are unmarried, and therefore are under the tuition of your parents; some of you are married, and consequently are under the protection of your husbands; and some of you are mothers, charged with the care and education of your children. You cannot be insensible, that different duties belong to these different characters and relations. Of these duties I cannot suppose you ignorant. You will excuse me, however, if I take the liberty to remind you of the most material of them.

Filial affection and reverence to your parents, my young female friends, the dictates of nature, aided by your own reflections, will point out as indispensible

duties upon your part, arising not only from the relation you bear to them, but from the obligations many of you are under to them, for their anxious care about your health, education, and morals; and for their unwearied endeavours to promote your reputation, comfort, and happiness in life. A young girl who is insensible of, or inattentive to these obligations, must be utterly void of filial piety and gratitude.

Parental and filial affection are, no doubt, mutual and reciprocal; but the former is for the most part by far the stronger of the two; a circumstance wisely ordered by Providence, for the more effectual preservation and care of the human species. Parents are impelled by the irresistible force of natural affection, to watch over their offspring with unremitting solicitude through every stage of their existence; and this affection, strong even from the first moment they behold their children, is increased by their pleasant pastime and prattle, and gradually receives new accessions of tenderness and strength, in proportion as the blossoms of virtue expand, or the seeds of real or fancied excellence take root and spring up in their minds. On the other hand, the affection which children feel for their parents, depends not upon the worth of the person on whom it is placed, of which they are incapable to judge at the time when it is felt; but principally, upon the experience of benefits received, the recollection of which has a powerful tendency to draw forth the affections of children towards their

their parents, whom, from principles of gratitude, they feel themselves constrained to love as their benefactors. In proportion as children grow up, this affection is still farther strengthened, on both sides, by the reciprocation of benefits and kind offices, till in some cases it becomes as strong upon the part of the children, as it is upon that of the parents.

Obedience to your parents, in every thing that is lawful and in your power to perform, is a duty which I wish, my young friends, to inculcate earnestly upon your minds; and indeed, it is a duty to which, from the natural ductility of your dispositions, if not depraved by bad education and example, you may be easily trained. You should remember, that this obedience extends to what many of you are unwilling to admit, a right of prohibiting your forming any connections by marriage, without their approbation. At the same time, I will readily allow, that the authority of parents, which, in this case in particular, ought to be exercised with equal tenderness and judgment, does not extend to an absolute right of disposing of their daughters in marriage, according to their inclinations, without consulting those of their children. The dictates of nature should not be overborn, even by parental authority. But obedience in every other case that is lawful, when required by the parents, should be readily yielded by the children. The History of Fidelia, recorded in the following Letter, will illustrate and exemplify this observation.

LETTER XLVII.

FIDELIA was the daughter of Eudoxus, a gentleman who had once possessed an opulent fortune, a great part, however, of which he had lost by the failure of an eminent mercantile company, with whom he had entrusted it. Having secured the remainder, which was still very considerable, in the stocks, he retired to a country house which he possessed, at the distance of a few miles from the metropolis, where he lived in a quiet and elegant independence, and where his society was courted by all the neighbouring gentlemen, who had any pretensions to refined manners or polite accomplishments.

Eudoxus having, in about two years after his retirement, had the misfortune to lose an amiable wife, to whom he was strongly and tenderly attached, was for sometime overwhelmed with grief at an affliction as severe as it was irremediable. When the first violent gust of passion had subsided in that calm melancholy, which delights to ruminate on the worth of the deceased,

ceased, and which gently agitates without tearing the heart, he summoned up all the natural fortitude of his mind, aided by the consolations of religion, to sustain the shock. As he was blessed with an only daughter, whose name I have above mentioned, he resolved to transfer the affection which he had entertained for the mother, to this dearest pledge of her love; and by an unremitting attention to her health and education, to discharge the duties of both parents, which he now considered as devolved upon him.—His first care therefore, was to provide for her a discreet and attentive nurse, under whose management she became healthy and vigorous, and exhibited early indications of a temper equally placid and sprightly. As she advanced to that period when the human blossom begins to blow, and to expand its leaves in all their luxuriance and beauty, to that period, when the affections shoot forth, and the heart takes an interest in the objects and scenes around it, he perceived that there was now occasion for redoubling his attention and care, for giving a proper direction to those various propensities and passions, which nature hath implanted in the mind.

Eudoxus, well knowing the importance of attaching her affections strongly to himself, in order to promote the success of his salutary instructions, employed every mean he could devise, for rivetting and strengthening those affections in her mind, which, as it was full of tenderness and sensibility, he very easily effected. As he wished to appear to her not only

only in the light of a fond father, but of her kindest friend and benefactor, he effectually accomplished his aim, by his indulgent and affectionate behaviour to her, which entirely gained her heart. Attached as she was to her father by the strongest ties of gratitude and affection, founded upon the most important benefits conferred upon her, she seemed to live wholly for him, and made it the study and business of her life to promote his ease, comfort and happiness.

While Eudoxus endeavoured to store the mind of Fidelia with useful knowledge, he made it his principal study to form her heart to the love of virtue. And indeed, under his tuition, she became an amiable young lady of consummate worth, as much distinguished by the improvements of her mind, and the dispositions of her heart, as by the elegance of her form, and her personal graces and attributes.

Fidelia was now in her twentieth year; and though she had a soul susceptible of the most exquisite tenderness and sensibility, and had been frequently solicited in marriage by several young gentlemen of fortune, she had hitherto declined every connection that had been proposed to her, resolved not to give her hand where she could not bestow her heart.

An object, however, was at last presented to her view, which had sufficient power to awaken all the tender passions of her nature, and to make an impression on that heart, which had resisted the solicitations of so many lovers.

Lysander, a young gentleman bred to the study of the

the law, which he had lately begun to practise, possessed of great integrity and honour, and distinguished no less by the graces of his person and address, than by the accomplishments of his mind, happened to come on a visit to Eudoxus, along with a neighbouring gentleman, who was his friend.

Both Lysander and Fidelia were at their very first interview mutually struck with each others appearance and conversation; and the frequent visits which Lysander paid her, and the various intercourse which, with Eudoxus' approbation, passed between them, contributed to add fuel to that flame, which love had kindled in both their hearts.

Lysander, having for some time cultivated an acquaintance with Eudoxus, to whose house his distinguished merit always made him a welcome guest, at last ventured to disclose his passion to Fidelia, which he did with that tremulous hesitation, which is the effect of genuine sensibility and modesty united, and at the same time with that ardour, which native sincerity, and a deep felt interest in the success of his addresses, naturally inspired.

Fidelia had too much sense and generosity to dissemble her sentiments, after this ingenuous declaration of her lover. She thanked him for his favourable opinion of her, readily acknowledged her esteem for his character, and even confessed the partiality of her attachment to him. She told him, however, at the same time, that it was her unalterable resolution, what-

whatever her feelings or her sufferings might be, to give no farther encouragement to his addresses, till she knew whether or not they were approved of by her father; for, added she, as I am well assured he will not force me to marry contrary to my inclinations, I should reckon myself unworthy of that tender affection with which he has always treated me, if I indulged in myself, or encouraged in another, a passion of which he might finally disapprove.

Lysander could not help in his own mind approving of her resolution, however adverse it might prove in the issue to his hopes. He determined, therefore, to address her father, with a modest yet manly freedom, and to solicit with earnestness his consent to a match, which he felt to be essential to his happiness.

Eudoxus had too much penetration not to have perceived that the affections of the two lovers were irrevocably fixed upon each other, though at the same time, from the experience he had of his daughter's filial reverence and love, he was inclined to believe, that she would never take any step that could be considered as a violation of her duty, or that might indicate the smallest disrespect to parental authority. Conscious, however, as he was of the merit of her lover, he was desirous of obtaining an unequivocal proof of Fidelia's filial duty, which he resolved to put to the test. When Lysander, therefore, respectfully yet warmly solicited his consent to the proposed union, Eudoxus, after having thanked him for his favourable sentiments and intentions with regard

gard to his daughter, told him with an honest freedom, that in his opinion it would be improper for him to form any matrimonial connection, till he was more established in business; and that therefore, though he should be always glad to see him at his house when convenient for him, in the character of a friend, he was sorry to add, that he could not receive him in the character of a lover of his daughter.

Lysander was overwhelmed with grief at this cool but steady declaration of Eudoxus; and felt the refusal more sensibly, as from a consciousness of having gained his esteem, he was not without hopes of obtaining his consent to the proposed connection. Recovering himself, however, in some degree, from the consternation into which he had been thrown, he replied, with a dejected air, that he sincerely wished his daughter a husband more worthy of her, though it was impossible she could ever obtain one by whom she was more tenderly beloved. He added, that as his staying any longer in his house would only serve to feed a hopeless passion, he was determined, both for Fidelia's peace and for his own, to leave it next morning, when he would request his commands for London.

Eudoxus having approved of his adhering for some time at least to his resolution, till the tenderness of love should be mellowed into the warmth of a generous and disinterested friendship, excused himself to Lysander for leaving the room, and repaired to the apartment of Fidelia. Finding her alone, he accosted her

her, with the most affectionate benignity, acknowledged her uninterruptedly dutiful behaviour to him; repeated his promise of never attempting to force her to marry any one who might be disagreeable to her inclinations, and at the same time intimated his expectation, that she would not dispose of her hand in marriage, in opposition to his. She assured him that she would not; And though our attachments, added she, are not always in our own power, I will subdue those of which you may disapprove, as far as I am able; and as I know that you can have no motive for your conduct but my happiness, I shall always esteem it a duty that I owe to so indulgent and affectionate a parent, to form no connections without his entire consent. Then give me your promise, my Fidelia, said he, tenderly embracing her, that you will sacrifice your attachment to Lysander to your filial duty; because, though I acknowledge he is a man of worth, it is improper you should indulge it, as I am confident your merit will procure you a lover of equal worth, in more independent circumstances. Fidelia, pale with astonishment and concern, at so unexpected a requisition from her father, calmly replied, that however dear the sacrifice, she would implicitly submit to his will.

Eudoxus, whose sympathetic and parental heart would not allow him any longer to afflict the sensibility of Fidelia, by occasioning her such exquisite distress, folded her once more in his arms, and exclaimed, My dear Fidelia, forgive the trial I have made of

your

your filial duty, which I am satisfied would induce you to forego your own happiness, in order to promote that of your father. In the present case, however, they are perfectly compatible and coincident; and I can have no higher earthly enjoyment, than to see you united in the sacred bonds of marriage to Lysander, who is so worthy of your love. Then taking her by the hand, and conducting her into the parlour where he left her lover, he presented her to Lysander; and warmly embracing him, Do you too, my dear Lysander, forgive the pain I have given you, in order to make trial of the generosity and tenderness of your affection to Fidelia, of which I am now thoroughly convinced. I most cheerfully consent to the union you solicit. Formed for each others happiness, may you exhibit a bright example of conjugal fidelity and love to dissolute and unthinking youth, who are as much strangers to true enjoyment as to real virtue! Both the lovers, unable to express the mingled sentiments of veneration, joy and gratitude, which swelled their hearts, burst into tears, and implored the choicest blessings of heaven on the author of their happiness. To conclude, they were soon after united in marriage, Eudoxus having settled upon them the half of his fortune.

Lysander, by his abilities in his profession, but more by his virtues, rose to distinction and wealth; and Fidelia blessed him with a promising family, in whom the graces and virtues of both parents were harmoniously blended.

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LETTER XLVIII.

I Observed, Ladies, that some of you are married, and therefore are under the protection of your husbands. As you are supposed to stand in the relation, and to sustain the character of wives, I hope you will readily allow, that there are certain duties of a peculiar kind incumbent upon you towards your husbands, resulting from the relation you bear to them, which it highly concerns you to discharge.

I acknowledged, in a former Letter, that the general character you sustain, as the friends and companions of man, supposes an equality, which appears at first view somewhat inconsistent with the superiority claimed by our sex, and often exercised with too much rigour over yours. It cannot be denied, that where there is a great disparity in the outward condition, and in the inward temper, capacity, and dispositions of the mind, betwixt persons of different sexes, there can be no foundation for a perfect friendship. The question therefore is, wherein consists that

that equality, which, it must be confessed, is necessary to the character of the friends and companions of our sex, and how is it compatible with the plea of our prerogative? Without entering too deeply into this delicate subject, I would observe, that the equality necessary to constitute that friendship betwixt the sexes, for which they were mutually designed, implies an equal participation of the rights and privileges of rational beings, destined for an immortal existence; and such a happy conformity of the qualities of the mind, and of the dispositions and affections of the heart, as are favourable to the friendship of two individuals of different sexes; at the same time that it admits of that subordination of the gentler sex to their male companions, which results from their different constitutions both mental and corporeal, and particularly from the last being destined and qualified to be the guardians and protectors of their female friends.

I am not ignorant that there are some ladies of uncommon spirit, who after they are married, imagine, or at least act as if they did imagine that all domestic subordination upon their part was then at an end, and that they are entirely their own mistresses. Being now released from the fetters of parental dominion, and *emancipating themselves from the restraints of the matrimonial yoke*, they resolve to enjoy their liberty, and to "*call no man their master upon earth.*"

Though I acknowledge, Ladies, I am very fond of vivacity and spirit in your sex, and consider these

ingredients as an admirable seasoning in the matrimonial feast; yet I am inclined to think, that too great a proportion of these ingredients sometimes spoils the entertainment. Give me leave likewise to remind you, that there are many of our sex, who though sound Whigs in their political principles, retain a little tincture of Jacobitism in their principles of domestic government; and how much soever they detest those exploded doctrines of passive obedience and nonresistance in the government of the state, they are not for excluding them altogether in the government of their households.

It is a question, which to political writers hath been often a subject of discussion, what form of government is upon the whole best suited to the nature and state of man. And some of them have given the preference to the republican form, some to a limited, and some to an absolute monarchy. I shall not enquire which of these forms is attended with the greatest advantages in the government of a state; but it seems to be the opinion of most of our sex, that in the government of a family, a monarchy, I will not suppose that they mean an absolute one, which for my own part I do not much like, is the best; for a house divided against itself, they think, cannot stand, any more than a kingdom; and if the ruling power must be vested in one, they trust that most wives are able to declare from experience, that it cannot be placed in better hands, than in those of their own husbands.

I am perfectly aware, that the sovereignty of which many of our sex are so tenacious, will be disputed by those high spirited dames, who have long exercised, I will not say usurped, an uncontroulable dominion over their *patient* and *acquiescing* husbands. I will indeed readily allow, that these ladies may have one plea in their favour, that of *prescription;* and that since the æra of their matrimonial union, there may not have been a single *interruption* of the authority they claim. But as I am afraid that some individuals of our sex may be obstinate and refractory enough to dispute their title to a sovereignty, which however *long* it has been *exercised*, and however *patiently* it hath been *submitted to*, they think of too much importance to be determined by the single plea of *possession;* I think it incumbent upon me in candour, to declare, unwilling as I should be to strip the ladies of any of their *rightful* privileges, that in my opinion, the *remonstrants* have reason to expect, that their *opponents* should adduce some other evidence, if any they have, in support of their claim.

As I shall for my own part decline encountering female reasoning or eloquence upon this point, I shall content myself with referring my fair antagonists to an authority which I am afraid must be allowed to be against them, and which I am sure they are too good Christians to controvert. The authority I have in my eye, is that of the apostle Paul, who indeed seems to maintain the prerogatives of the husbands, with as

much earnestness as most of his sex; and who, unfortunately for the plea of female sovereignty, enjoins wives to be subject to their husbands, (forgive, Ladies, the harshness of the expression,) *in every thing*. "What, Sir," cries the spirited Scintilla, "do you pretend to inculcate the antiquated doctrine of passive obedience upon our sex, and to found that doctrine upon scripture? Let me remind you, Sir, that the apostle Paul, upon whose injunction you found your opinion, spoke upon occasions without book; for he acknowledges, he sometimes delivers his own private opinion, without the influence of inspiration; and it is perfectly clear to me, he could not have been inspired, when he maintained a doctrine so subversive of the natural equality of the two sexes. Had he in general allowed a divided dominion, I should not have objected to it; but I am determined not to resign one punctilio of our privileges, to a sex, which if it is allowed to make the smallest encroachments upon our rights, would observe no bounds, but would transform us into their slaves.—The Salique law, which in France excludes women from the throne, thank God, does not obtain in Britain; and let me remind you, Sir, as a proof of our capacity to govern kingdoms as well as families, that England never made a greater figure at home or abroad, than during the reign of the illustrious Queen Elizabeth. If a woman is fit to govern a nation, I hope you will allow that she must be fit to govern her own husband; and if he happen to be the weak-

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er vessel, as you must own is often the case, it is evidently for his advantage that he be under the management of his wife." "I am far, Scintilla, from doubting the capacity of your sex. It is only their right to govern, that I am disposed to question.—But as you are so violent a stickler, for what you conceive, in some cases at least, to be the rights of your sex, I have only to wish, my lively friend, that you may rule over the *good man your domestic subject*, with a little more lenity and moderation, than the great queen above-mentioned sometimes did over her national subjects at large." But seriously speaking, I declare for my own part, that I detest arbitrary and tyrannic rule on either side, in private, if possible, more than I do in public life; and as the greatest punishment that can be inflicted on a man, who exercises such rule over a meek and quiet spirit at home, I heartily wish that he may in a second marriage be matched with a termagant, who shall be the plague of his life. If any of you, my friends, have the misfortune to be connected with surly husbands, void of good nature, for it is to be apprehended there are several of the sex thus unfortunate; I am sorry to say, that I know no remedy but meekness and patience. You may, indeed, reason and remonstrate with your husbands; but I seriously advise you, not to provoke them by contumacy or contempt. Your retorted invectives and reproaches may rankle, perhaps enrage your haughty lords, but will neither reclaim them, nor mitigate your sufferings.

" Music," says the Poet, " has power to charm the savage heart;" and if any thing can melt the heart of an imperious husband, who has treated an amiable wife with barbarity and outrage, it must be the plaintive distress of the fair sufferer, weeping in silence over those injuries, which the penitent contrition of the man who has inflicted them, can alone redress. He must be a savage, indeed, who can be unaffected by such a sight. It was by a spectacle of this kind, that Milton has, with great judgment and knowledge of the human heart, represented our first progenitors as totally overcome, even though the woman was in the transgression.

Soon his heart relented,
Towards her, his life so late, and sole delight,
Now at his feet submissive in distress.

If such is often the power of suffering beauty, though guilty, what must be its effect when innocent? You have no reason therefore, Ladies, to repine at the want of that dominion, shall I say? which is an object of ambition to many of your sex, or of that influence over their husbands, which may reasonably become an object of desire to them all, though this object is not commonly nor creditably to be attained by violence.

" Far other arts are yours, far other arms."

Tears, expostulations and intreaties, my lovely friends, are your proper weapons. By these, you may make an impression on, I will not call it the savage,

vage, but the susceptible and yielding heart of man; which for the most part you may, as many of you do, govern at pleasure. To a dominion acquired and established by influence and persuasion, I have no objection. Its effects are like the silent and salutary dews of heaven upon the tender plant, which spreads its leaves and raises its head under their benign and genial influence. Your governing in this manner will, I firmly believe, often be for your husbands' emolument, and it certainly will be for your own credit.

LETTER XLIX.

I AM afraid that many of you, Ladies, will think you have had enough, perhaps more than enough, of the unpalatable doctrine advanced in the preceding Letter. Give me leave, therefore, to assure you, that it is a doctrine which though scriptural, I am not fond of maintaining, against a sex I so much honour and respect; and which I would only wish to maintain, against those individuals of it who are ambitious of a dominion, that is neither for their husbands' credit, nor for their own. I will therefore, except when I plead the cause of my own sex, against those refractory females above mentioned, which after all, is I am afraid, an ineffectual attempt, exclude that obnoxious word *Obedience* from my system, because it too often gives occasion for the erection of a tribunal that is perfectly odious, and for the exertion of an authority that leads to despotism. In place of this word I will substitute others of a more pleasing sound, but when properly understood, (be not startled, Ladies,)

dies,) of similar import. Instead of inculcating *Obedience*, so harsh in its sound to a female ear, I would beg leave, my amiable friends, to say, that you are under indispensible obligations to cultivate *Love*, *Respect*, *Attention*, and *Complaisance* to your husbands; as well as *Good Humour* in your general deportment to all, and to them in particular.

The first duty that I mentioned, was the *Love* of your husbands. The scriptures tell us, that a man ought to leave "*father and mother and cleave to his wife;*" and surely, by parity of reason, a wife ought to leave father and mother and *cleave* to her husband. The matrimonial union, my fair ones, is of the most tender and lasting kind. When it is formed upon proper motives, and cemented by mutual affection, it is attended with the happiest effects to the persons who are thus united, as well as to society in general. With regard to the duties of the matrimonial state, *love* may be said to *be the fulfilling of the law*. Love your husbands, therefore, with a sincere and unalterable affection, and you will feel no duty, not even the *obedience* which a man of sense will desire, either troublesome or grievous, because it will be *free* and *voluntary* upon your part, not *compelled* or *required* by your husbands.

I mentioned *Respect*, as another duty which you owe them; and be assured of it, that it is a duty of great importance, which it highly concerns you to discharge; and which naturally flows from the one last mentioned, that of *love*. A woman who *respects* her

her husband in sentiment and conduct, both at home and abroad, does credit in fact to her own judgment; as by doing so, she shews, that she has a proper sense of that decorum which she ought to observe, in thinking as well as speaking favourably of him.—If a woman indulge disrespectful thoughts of her husband, she will be in great hazard, especially if she is at any time irritated against him by provocation, of being betrayed into contemptuous and disrespectful treatment of him, not only while they are alone, but when they are in company, to such a degree, that while it reflects peculiar ignominy upon the wife, it justly subjects both to the imputation of imprudence and passion, which admit of no excuse. Should any lady attempt to justify the indulgence of disrespectful sentiments towards her husband, by observing, that our thoughts are not in our own power, I would reply, that they are more in our power than we commonly imagine. If a woman has, from any interested or improper motive, married a man whom she cannot esteem, the fault is her own; and it is at least her duty to think as favourably of him as she can, and to hide as much as possible his foibles from others. The woman who exposes her husband, and attempts to shine at his expence, is not only void of every sentiment of propriety and decorum, but discovers a degree of vanity and weakness, united with malignity, which must render her character both odious and contemptible.

LETTER L.

BESIDES the duties above illustrated, there are three others, of no small influence in promoting conjugal felicity, which I wish to recommend to married women; and these, as I have already, observed are, *Attention* and *Complaisance* to their husbands, and *Good Humour* in their general behaviour to all, and to *them in particular*. While I recommend these duties to the observance of the married ladies, let it be understood, that I consider them as necessary to be observed by the husbands to their wives, as much as by wives to their husbands. By a constant reciprocation indeed, of kind attentions and of real complaisance, the harmony and happiness of the matrimonial state is preserved from sinking into flatness and insipidity.

There is seldom any occasion for recommending these duties to unmarried persons of either sex. A strong desire to render themselves mutually agreeable to each other, readily suggests to them the means of

of accomplishing the end they have in view; and young persons, whose minds are in any degree congenial, rarely fail in the attainment of this end. I know of no intercourse whatever, in which the desire of pleasing is more diversified, or more strongly expressed, than in that of courtship; an intercourse, in which the simple effusions of the rural swain to his mistress, are often more emphatical, and always more sincere, than the studied compliments of the well bred courtier. If all ranks of men and women are thus solicitous to please one another before marriage, and especially during the time of courtship, how happens it, may we ask, that this disposition prevails in general in so inferior a degree in the married state, to that in which it always appears in the unmarried? This failure in point of complaisance, may be partly accounted for from that familiarity which naturally takes place betwixt married persons, and which is unfavourable to politeness; and partly from a certain degree of languor, which often succeeds the enjoyment of the happiness which was the object of their mutual wishes, where no endeavours have been exerted in order to encrease that happiness, or ensure its continuance.

In order to preserve the pleasures of the matrimonial state therefore, from becoming stale, vapid, and tasteless, it is of much more importance to married persons of both sexes than is commonly imagined, to cultivate real politeness of manners, and to shew a kind attention in the performance of agreeable offices

fices to each other. This mutual interchange of kind and complaisant offices, and the manner of performing them, will give new dignity to the duties of social life, and will stimulate to more generous exertions, and be productive of more refined enjoyment.

You will readily conceive, that the attention and complaisance I recommend, are very different from those empty professions of respect, and that unmeaning jargon of compliment, which wear the semblance of good breeding, but are neither consistent with sense nor sincerity. Let it ever be remembered, that the complaisance I wish you to cultivate, is founded upon kindness and good nature, or rather is kindness and good nature itself, expressed in an agreeable manner. You can never, my charming friends, want opportunities of discovering this endearing disposition in your behaviour to your husbands, in the ordinary intercourse of life. You can discover it in your attention to his health, to his reputation, and to his happiness; and in the performance of all the agreeable offices that can promote any of these. I would by no means wish you to imagine, that the *blandishments* you practised on the *lover*, should be laid aside in your behaviour to the *husband*. This change in your conduct, would not convey to a man of sense the most favourable opinion of your sincerity. He would be apt to suppose, that your former manners had been wholly artificial, and that they had been assumed and practised in order to ensnare unwary hearts, and that when you had caught the

the prize for which you threw out the bait, you had nothing more to contend for; but without any farther exertion, had allowed all your former insinuating arts to stagnate in the dead calm of indifference and insipidity. If, Ladies, you wish to secure that empire over the hearts of your husbands, which your charms, your complaisance, and your attention first gave you, I would, as your friend, earnestly advise you to continue that attention and complaisance.—Let not these dispositions, however, be artificial or assumed, for a man of discernment will easily perceive, and assuredly despise the imposition. Let your manners be sweet and gentle like your minds; let genuine benignity irradiate your countenance; and *let the law of kindness dwell upon your lips;* and if your husbands are possessed of any tolerable degree of good nature, you cannot fail to establish a real and permanent influence over their hearts.

Good Humour was the last duty I mentioned, as incumbent on married women. I have already made some remarks upon this subject in a former Letter, wherein I shewed, that this delightful disposition was one of those qualities which many of your sex it is to be hoped possess, and which is necessary to render them in the highest degree the agreeable friends and companions of man. If this quality is necessary to render you agreeable in general society, it must surely be no less necessary to render you agreeable wives to those with whom you are connected in marriage.

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Be assured of it, that it will more than any other disposition, disarm resentment and conciliate love.

" And trust me, dear, good humour will prevail,
" When airs and slights, and screams and scolding fail."
POPE.

In fact, good humour may be considered as the balm of life, which heals the diseases of the mind, and mitigates the various troubles and sorrows incidental to humanity. In the married state in particular, it is a lenient but powerful medicine, which corrects those sour and acrid humours, that poison the cup of matrimonial felicity. If, therefore, you wish to preserve the affections of your husbands, let perpetual good humour become the prevailing habit of your temper, and let it cheer and animate every part of your deportment. The History of Miranda and Eubulus will exemplify the truth and importance of the above remarks, and will serve to shew the effects of the neglect of the duties I have been recommending, in the strongest light.

Miranda was the daughter of a nobleman of high rank, but of small fortune, and who being possessed of uncommon beauty, and of a few superficial graces, did not think it necessary, with such advantages, to cultivate more solid accomplishments. Her beauty and her accomplishments, such as they were, drew a crowd of admirers around her, but made a deep impression upon the heart of Eubulus, a country squire, more distinguished by his good nature, than

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by intellectual ability, who was smitten with love at the first sight of her, and immediately solicited her in marriage.

As the match was highly advantageous for Miranda, in point of interest, he found little difficulty in the courtship; and the marriage was celebrated in a short time, with great pomp, to the seeming satisfaction of all parties. Miranda, having thus succeeded in ensnaring the heart of her devoted lover, whom she imagined she had now effectually secured in her toils, gave herself no farther trouble in reconciling him to his captivity or his chains; but imagining she had conferred an honour, instead of having received an obligation, she thought herself entitled to appropriate her husband's fortune to the enlargement of the circle of her pastime and her pleasures. She now appeared in every place of fashionable resort, with a more brilliant lustre, and was ambitious of attracting the notice of every one, excepting her own husband. Though she swore perpetual love to him at the altar, it was to his fortune that she meant to restrict her vows; and though she promised to treat him with reverence and respect, she considered the obligation as extending no farther than to what the rules of decency and good manners required before company.

Both the pride and the love of Eubulus were hurt by her levity, indifference, and neglect. He remonstrated with her on the impropriety of her conduct, of which he told her the loss of character would

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be the infallible consequence; and reminded her of her total neglect of that attention to him, to which he thought himself entitled, as her husband. His remonstrances and declarations had no other effect than to excite her resentment, and provoke her to treat him with more aggravated insolence and scorn. Her continued contempt, and intolerable insults, at last roused his sensibility, and their mutual and reiterated reproaches terminated in a final separation.

LETTER LI.

I HAVE considered, Ladies, in the three preceding Letters, the duties you owe to your husbands, as their companions and friends in the matrimonial state.

There is still another very honourable character which many of you sustain, which, while it ought to render you objects of peculiar and tender attachment to your husbands, places you in a very respectable point of view as members of society—that of mothers. This Letter, therefore, shall be devoted to the consideration of the importance of the maternal character, previous to my enquiry into the duties resulting from it.

If we estimate the importance and respectability of the character of which I am treating, from the difficulties attending the proper discharge of its duties, and from the signal advantages redounding to the community at large from the performance of them, (and this appears to me a very fair method of estimation,)

mation) your merit will, indeed, appear in the most conspicuous light. If we consider, in particular, the uneasiness and languor, the sickness and pain, usually attendant on pregnancy and child-birth; the fatigue of the mother in nursing and tending her infant charge; the anxious days and sleepless nights she often passes in this necessary, but troublesome occupation; and the patience and solicitude with which she watches over her sickly, or soothes her fretful babe; we must allow, that she must be possessed of a large share of resolution, steadiness and spirit, to enable her to perform with general approbation those various parts of parental duty.

I am aware, it will be said by many of our sex, who are not disposed to allow women all the credit they deserve, for the performance of their duty, in the instance above mentioned, that they are impelled to this performance by the irresistible force of instinct and natural affection. But I would ask these gentlemen, do not instinct and natural affection exist in the male as well as in the female part of our species? And do these produce equal anxiety, care, and attention in our sex? It will, perhaps, be likewise farther contended, that nature hath not only destined, but qualified women for the duties to which I have alluded. I grant both their destiny and qualification. But have they not singular merit, in obeying with such promptitude and alacrity her sovereign dictates? For shame, therefore, let us do them justice, and let us acknowledge their merit,

and our own deficiency. I imagine I hear some haughty individuals of my own sex, proud of their prerogative, exclaim, "What, Sir, would you send us again to the nursery to prattle and play with our children, and rock them asleep? Has not Smellie told us, that this is the proper province of women, and that loquacity, one of the distinguishing characteristics of the sex, is bestowed on them by nature, for the purpose of amusing their children, and of teaching them to speak; and while he allows that some men talk as much as women, he denies that such beings are men, and observes, that nature seems to have originally made them for women, but by some cross accident, as happens in the production of monsters, the external male form has been superinduced upon a female stock." With all your fancied dignity and pre-eminence, however, my lordly friend, and with all the aid you derive from the sentiments of the ingenious philosopher above quoted, you must at least allow the softer sex the merit of discharging those duties which nature dictates, and to which she so strongly impells them, to far better purpose than their male companions and friends discharge duties of a different kind, to which by the constitution of their nature they are equally obliged. You must permit me, likewise, to observe, that there have been several examples of men both of genius and learning, who without any derogation from their dignity, have occasionally mingled with pleasure in the sports and pastimes of the nursery. To a man there-

therefore, even of the dignified character and deportment above mentioned, who is not very remarkable, either for the studiousness or activity of his disposition, I would recommend it, (without infringing on his prerogative be it spoken,) to relieve occasionally his poor oppressed wife, of at least some part of her toil, by taking a share of it upon himself. Or if he is too proud, or too lazy to submit to a participation of this toil, I think, should the husband happen to have a tuneful voice, it would not be amiss, that now and then he should entertain his spouse and her little charge with a song, or should at other times with a lullaby lull them both asleep. If serenading a mistress, was in an age of more gallantry than the present, practised by the enraptured lover under her window, why should not the husband be as gallant, as to serenade, at least within doors, a dutiful and affectionate wife? But to be serious and drop this digression, there is another still more important sphere, in which several women are qualified to shine, and which, where the duties of that sphere are properly discharged, exhibits the maternal character in the most illustrious point of view, and in the highest state of intellectual and moral improvement; I mean that situation, which as mothers, affords them the fairest scope for communicating to the tender and docile minds of their children, the first lessons of piety and wisdom. If these lessons are judiciously instilled into their minds, when under the early tuition of the mother, they make often a permanent im-

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pression, that serves to counteract the influence of temptations to which they may be exposed, amidst the shocks and contingencies of their future lives.—I imagine I see the mother in this important situation, with anxious care, watching over the different tempers and dispositions of her children, and adapting her instructions, her discipline, and her treatment of them, with equal ability and prudence, to their different characters and inclinations. I see her correcting the waywardness and subduing the obstinacy of temper in one, and checking the violence and irregularity of passion in another; encouraging the timid, repressing the forward, and by her singular judgment and address, calling forth the natural energies of the young and aspiring mind. I see her sometimes employing the curb, sometimes the spur, but seldom the lash, to effect her purpose. I see her carefully sowing the seeds of those virtues in the susceptible heart, which springing up under the genial influence of heaven, and reared by her fostering hand and maternal care, aided by the culture of the other parent, rise into trees of luxuriant growth and beauty, which diffuse their fragrant and salutary odour far around, and whose spreading foilage promises to cover and bless the nations with its shade. Considered in this point of view, a wise and judicious mother, attentive to the religion and education of her children, appears moving in a high and splendid orbit, shedding the beneficial and extensive influence of her instructions, through the different ranks of society,

society, and through the various departments of public and private life. Employed in this honourable career of duty, I contemplate her respectable character with the highest esteem and admiration. I see her children tutored by her instructions, treading in her steps, and imitating her example; and I behold with delight, distant generations rising up and calling her blessed.

What an important and illustrious part do such wives and mothers act in the general drama of social life! and how virtuously and honourably are they employed, when compared with the fribbles, the libertines, and the profligates of the other sex! The latter are the pests of society, which they corrupt by their principles and their conduct; the former are its ornamental supports, and while by their early and salutary instructions to their children, they counteract in a considerable degree the effect of the licentious principles and manners too generally prevalent in the higher walks of life, they promote the most valuable interests, and the real happiness of mankind, by the influence of their pious instructions, seconded by a virtuous example.

LETTER LII.

AS many of you, Ladies, stand in the relation, and sustain the character, of mothers, suffer me to throw out a few hints, with regard to the duties resulting from this relation, and peculiar to this character.

The peculiar duties of a mother are, a rational affection for her children, an assiduous attention to their education, and a well regulated œconomy in the management of her household affairs.

I need not suggest to you, my honoured friends, that you derive what is very properly called natural affection to your children, from instinct; but I must observe, that the right or wrong direction of this affection, depends very much upon yourselves. It is in the due regulation of it, that the mother has occasion to display her judgment and good sense.

The first expression of this affection, is that tender and pleasing office of the mother, the suckling of her children. There certainly can be no occupation more natural, or more proper to the mother, than this

this delightful task, which has a very powerful influence in drawing forth her affections to her offspring, and which she may be supposed to be much better qualified to perform than an hireling. I am sorry, however, to observe this first natural and important duty, so much neglected by the mothers of the present age, in the higher ranks of life; a neglect, which is one of the many pernicious consequences of a prevailing dissipation of manners. I am aware, that many of these plead bad health as an excuse for this neglect; and I am likewise aware, that in many instances, I do not say in all, this excuse is a mere pretence, in order to cover their reluctance to submit to a trouble, which would deprive them of participating in the fashionable amusements of the times. Let these fine ladies, who are too delicate for nursing their own children, but not too delicate for the constant vigils of Whist, or the intemperate folly of a route or masquerade, make the experiment for once, of suckling their children; and I will engage, they shall find it a far more agreeable occupation than any they have forfeited, or may forfeit, by the performance of their duty in this instance.

The education of her children, which is a still more important duty, ought to be the next and most assiduous care of the mother. It is a strange mistake to suppose, that this duty is devolved wholly on the other parent. On the contrary, a child being more frequently under the eye and care of his mother, naturally receives the rudiments of his education from her,

her; and it will require the utmost exertion of her judgment to communicate the first lessons of knowledge and virtue, with success. The father ought, no doubt, to co-operate with, and to direct the exertions of the mother, even during the state of childhood, till the boy arrive at maturer age, when he becomes more properly his charge. But the care of the Mother, both for his health and education, is indispensibly requisite in his tender years.

Let her therefore season his ductile mind with early piety, and accustom him to deeds of active beneficence, if she hope to derive comfort and pleasure from the influence of her instructions on his future conduct. Happy were it for the British Nation, if the example of that illustrious personage, whose amiable virtues ensure the domestic felicity of our Sovoreign, possessed in this respect an assimilating influence on all who come within the sphere of its radiance, and if her maternal love and pious care in the education of her children in particular, were more generally imitated by those who surround the Throne, and move in the higher walks of life.

A prudent and decent œconomy in the management of family affairs is no doubt the duty of both parents; but the due regulation and distribution of household expences is peculiarly incumbent on a wife and mother: this province is accordingly assigned to women by Apostolical authority, which enjoins them to *marry, bear children, and guide the house.* Let a decent, therefore, not a sordid œconomy, pervade

vade every part of your domestic management. Let your expenditure be suitable to your husbands' rank and fortune, reserving always a considerable part of your allowance for family expences, for charitable uses, and you will have the pleasure of enjoying, in conjunction with him, an unincumbered fortune, with dignity and comfort. The happy effects resulting from the faithful discharge of the various duties of the maternal character, were eminently displayed in the History of Melinda, with which I shall conclude this work.

LET-

LETTER LIII.

MELINDA was the daughter of Altamont, a gentleman of excellent sense, but of ordinary fortune, by whom she was early instructed in the various parts of useful and polite learning, at the same time that she was initiated by her mother, who was a notable housewife, in the several branches of domestic œconomy.

Melinda was no way remarkable for the beauty of her face, or the gracefulness of her person, but she had a sweetness in her air, and a gentleness in her manners, far more attractive and engaging, than external grace and beauty united. The amiable mind shone forth in the mildly-beaming eye and the placid countenance, and excited the esteem, while it conciliated the love of all who had sense to discern and value her merit. Though her conversation was neither distinguished by wit or humour, by brilliancy or conceit, it was both pleasing and instructive, and the justness and solidity of her remarks arrested the attention, and obtained the approbation of all who heard

heard them. Her disposition was cheerful but not sprightly; and she possessed a complacency and serenity of temper, which no accident could ruffle or discompose, and which might be compared to the smooth and expansive lake, when it is neither agitated by the storms of winter, nor even undulated by the breeze of spring. Such was the character, and such the dispositions of Melinda. Possessed of such amiable dispositions and accomplishments, she could not fail to gain many friends, and her uncommon merit procured her several lovers.

Of the candidates for her affection, Clitander, a young gentleman of considerable fortune in the South of England, had obviously the preference in her esteem. Clitander was distinguished by his sense, honour and virtue, and was the favourite of that part of the fair sex, whose character in any degree resembled his own. As he was fond of society, and had an elegant and improved mind, untainted by the vices or the follies of the times, he regularly repaired to London every winter, from his seat in the country, for the sake of obtaining company suitable to his taste. Having several times accidentally met with Altamont at a house where he was in the use of visiting, they insensibly contracted an esteem for each other; and Altamont, pleased with Clitander's conversation, gave him an invitation to his house, which he very readily accepted.

Both Clitander and Melinda felt upon the first interview, that attachment, which attracts two genial minds

minds to each other; and as he was politely invited by Altamont to repeat his visits, he resolved to cultivate a more particular acquaintance with a young lady, of whose character he had already conceived the most favourable opinion. His repeated visits at the house of Altamont, increased his esteem for Melinda, and while he imagined that he was only cultivating a friendship, from which both of them might derive much pleasure, he felt that a more tender passion had insensibly blended itself with that friendship, and had taken possession of his heart. As he perceived that the feelings of Melinda were in unison with his own, he disclosed the passion which could no longer be suppressed, and extorted from his amiable mistress an acknowledgement that she highly esteemed his merit, and could not be indifferent to his love. Clitander having obtained the consent of her parents, their nuptials were solemnized soon after, without pomp, to the inexpressible joy of the parties concerned, and to the peculiar satisfaction of the whole house of Altamont.

After their marriage, they returned to Clitander's country seat, where they spent the remainder of their life. Clitander was blessed with a numerous family of children, all of whom were during their infancy and childhood chiefly educated by Melinda herself, who carefully and judiciously instilled into their tender minds the first lessons of piety and virtue. The happy father lent her his aid in the performance of this delightful task, even during the state of childhood,

hood, co-operating with Melinda, in assiduous endeavours to expand the buds of genius and virtue into perfect blossom. As the boys advanced in years, he took them successively under his more immediate tuition; and after laying the foundation of a suitable education, and happily completing his plan, he had the pleasure to see them filling several useful and respectable stations in society, with honour to themselves, and with emolument to their country.

Such were the pleasures, and such the rewards of their united cares and labours, in the education of their children. In the shade of domestic retirement, Clitander found, in the company and conversation of his beloved Melinda, a fund of perpetual pleasure and entertainment, which never palled upon the mental taste, but which seemed renewed in all the various communications and familiar intercourse of private life. In Melinda, he possessed an amiable companion, a tender friend, and a faithful counsellor, who participated in all his joys and sorrows, and who increased the one, and diminished the other, by her participation. As her temper was like the effulgence of the evening sun, ever mild and serene, she diffused over the mind of Clitander the serenity which reigned in her own bosom. If at any time, care or anxiety hung on his brow, her prudent and salutary counsels and animating suggestions dissipated the cloud, inspired tranquillity and consolation, and restored contentment and harmony to his troubled breast.

When

When trouble press'd, she, still serene and free,
Smooth'd the rough path, and led him pleas'd along;
Or bade the children prattle at his knee,
Or rous'd his languor with a cheerful song.
Or with a tale dispell'd intruding thought,
Talk'd of the coming joy, recalled the past,
By pleasing arts, by fond caresses sought
To gild his hours, nor left him at the last *.

While Clitander spent his time in reading, in the company and conversation of his amiable spouse, in the education of his children, and in the management and improvement of his estate, Melinda devoted a great part of hers to the arts of domestic œconomy. By a prudent attention to these arts, she was enabled, from the very considerable savings of the annual expence allowed by her husband for house-keeping, to perform many acts of singular charity and beneficence, out of a fund which she considered as peculiarly her own; and her judicious acts of beneficence, added to the generous and charitable deeds of Clitander, to many a needy and deserving family, justly rendered this worthy couple the objects of the love and admiration of all around them.

I shall conclude this work, Ladies, with exhibiting to your view, a female character of consummate excellence, and a perfect pattern both of conjugal and maternal duty, selected from a book, which I trust you will ever revere; a character, which I wish you to contemplate not only with admiration, but with an

* Human Life, a Poem, by Dr. Ogilvie.

an ardent desire of imitating so illustrious a model, and with a fixed resolution to "*go and do likewise.*"

Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies.

The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil.

She will do him good, and not evil, all the days of her life.

She seeketh wool and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands.

She is like the merchants' ships, she bringeth her food from afar.

She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens.

She considereth a field, and buyeth it: with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard.

She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms.

She perceiveth that her merchandize is good: her candle goeth not out by night.

She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff.

She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy.

She is not afraid of the snow for her household, for all her household are clothed with scarlet.

She maketh herself coverings of tapestry; her clothing is silk and purple.

Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land.

She maketh fine linen and selleth it, and delivereth girdles unto the merchant.

Strength and honour are her clothing, and she shall rejoice in time to come.

She openeth her mouth with wisdom, and in her tongue is the law of kindness.

She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness.

Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her.

Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain; but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised* .

* Prov. chap. xxxi. ver. 10 to 29, and ver. 30.

The End.

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